Why Mussolini Is Worried By MARY TESTA *(page 12)*

FIFTEEN CENTS

December 31, 1940

NEW MASSES

DESIGN FOR EMPIRE

What the President of the Industrial Conference Board Told the Bankers

FORCED LABOR *for Your Son and Daughter*

by BRUCE MINTON

JOSEPH NORTH REPORTS ON MEXICO: II

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Between Ourselves

ALL too quickly the years unfold. This is NM's last issue of the forty-first year of the twentieth century. Just about thirty years ago a group of progressives were meeting for the purpose of planning a new magazine. Early in 1911 the MASSES was born. Hermann Sudermann was a contributor to that first issue. Thomas Seltzer was editor. A certain artist by the name of Arthur Young drew a cartoon in bold, black strokes.

Art Young, whose bald dome is now crowned by a halo of white hair, is thus a link between NM's past, the old MASSES, and today. And it is with joy that we are able to reproduce on this page his holiday greetings of 1941—the new and original card which NM received in the mail on the Monday before Christmas.

A quarter of a century ago the same Art Young was vigorously exposing the greed and tyranny of America's rulers. In the December issue of 1915 his double-page spread showed a huge, gross master ordering a sullen young woman to "breed for war." Tucked away in that issue of the old MASSES is an historic appeal. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn wrote movingly for help for one Joseph Hillstrom, condemned to be shot for organizing the IWW by the authorities of Utah. Joseph Hillstrom was none other than Joe Hill, today a gigantic figure of American labor folk lore. That was the 1915 holiday task of the warm and ardent Miss Flynn—to save Joe Hill.

It was Art Young whose cartoons were an important feature of the 1920 holiday issue of the old MASSES'

war-born son, the *Liberator*. Art drew a capitalist conducting a disunited orchestra. His title was "Con- at Geneva" and the cartoon was phetic of the short life of the gue of Nations. Beside Art's wing was the first of an immortal series: "Soviet Russia Now," by John Reed. And in that issue were two drawings by a new and hearty artist who has devoted his genius to the defense of the people, the same William Gropper whose work is to be found in this very issue. Intervention by the imperialist powers against the Soviet Union was being defeated by the new socialist state in those days of two decades ago, and in a second drawing Art Young exulted—a bloated corpse hanging high over a field on which a victorious Soviet worker strides.

Another decade and Art Young was no longer able to be active. The pen of Mike Gold was exposing the rottenness of the Hoover regime, pointing to the deepening crisis. Other artists, younger men swarmed into the pages of what was now NM, a monthly. There were many drawings by many pen-and-brushmen, and a powerful Gropper, a hungry family at a bare table—"Christmas Day, 1930."

Five years ago and NM was a weekly—Gropper again picking up the gage thrown down by Art Young — as Roosevelt "recovery" mocked the millions of unemployed. There was a great feature in that December issue of 1935 — John L. Spivak was in Warsaw where he heard the rumblings of a discontented Europe. Gropper hailed a new year of 1936—a banker bearing guns and planes for gifts. Last year, Spivak was again the feature — valiantly wielding the sword against Charles E. Coughlin.

Well, this is today, the end of an epochal decade. There's Art Young on this page and Gropper up ahead. NM faces the new year with courage and high hope. To Art Young, all of the other NM writers and artists, to our thousands of readers and friends—New Year greetings.

Members of NM's editorial and business staffs started the holiday celebrating with a party of their own at the NM office on the afternoon of the day before Christmas. Our business manager, Carl Bristel, played Santa Claus, in general taking his medicine like a man. This appeasement policy met with general favor, particularly since it was further implemented with refreshments, both liquid and solid.

A few brief notes . . . you will find advertisements of the New Year's Eve NM Rigadoon elsewhere in this issue. It's at Manhattan Center. . . . Sunday afternoon Dec. 29, Stuyvesant Van Veen invites you to a fiesta for the American Rescue Ship Mission from Marseilles to Vera Cruz. The address is 216 E. 45th Street, the place Mr. Van Veen's studio. There will be dancing, singers, music, games, an art exhibit and refreshments—all for the price of 50 cents. . . . And speaking of the American Rescue Ship Mission—NM is shortly to devote an entire issue to the support of the Spanish refugees who must be brought from concentration camps in France to the safety of Mexico. More details of this issue very soon.

This is the week when most people have just finished wrapping bundles in fancy paper sprinkled with Christmas wreaths, sticks of red and white striped candy, and silvery stars. In the circulation room of NM, other and serviceable bundles are still being wrapped, although, as you read this, the Christmas holiday is over. These are the Bundles for America, which are being distributed to hundreds who have been unable to buy NM at newsstands or who have never read NM before.

Inside these less colorful bundles are copies of NM, offered to you through an ingenious plan of the circulation department. You may, for instance, buy up to twenty-five copies of NM at 10 cents each, twenty-five to fifty copies at 9 cents each, over fifty copies at 8 cents each, to be distributed, if you choose, by yourself, either by hand or by mail. If you prefer, you may mail to NM the names of your friends and we will mail the copies with no extra charge to you. Or, if you wish to help NM reach the thousands who are strangers to you but whose names are on NM's mailing list, send us the money and we will do the rest. We think this idea of Bundles for America is an excellent one. Will you help make it more important to America than the Bundles for War?

As we go to press the tragic news comes that Ruth McKenney's sister Eileen and her husband, Nathaniel West, were killed in an automobile accident on the west coast. To Ruth NM's entire staff extends its deepest condolences. Those of us who knew Eileen and her husband are heartbroken.

Who's Who

MARY TESTA is on the staff of the Italian newspaper, *L'Unita del Popolo*. . . . James Morison is a free-lance labor journalist. . . . Ralph Warner is a music and drama critic. . . . Samuel Putnam is an expert on Latin-American cultural affairs. . . . Millicent Lang is a graduate student specializing in contemporary literature. . . . Henry F. Cooper is a housing authority. . . . Joy Davidman's poems have frequently appeared in NM. . . . Michael Finn is a Chicago newspaper man and poet.

THIS WEEK

NEW MASSES, VOL. XXXVIII, NO. 2

December 31, 1940

Design for Empire *An editorial article* 3
We Made Laguna a Garden *by Joseph North* 6
The Plot Against the Youth *by Bruce Minton* . . . 9
Gropper's Cartoon 11
Why Mussolini Is Worried *by Mary Testa* 12
"White Only" *by James Morison* 15
Hoover That Termite *by Ruth McKenney* 16
Lockout on the Air Waves *by Ralph Warner* 17
Editorial Comment 19

REVIEW AND COMMENT

One of Us *by Samuel Putnam* 22
Understanding the News *by Daniel Todd* 23
For the Gentlemen *by Joy Davidman* 23
Literary Criticism *by Millicent Lang* 23
Guns and Housing *by Henry F. Cooper* 25
Christmas Carol *by Michael Finn* 25

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The Conquest of the Mannerheim Line *by Daniel Todd* 26
Mr. Shaw Retreats *by Alvah Bessie* 28
"King Lear" *by A. B.* 29

Art work by Rodney, Michaels.

Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification sent to NEW MASSES rather than to the post office will give the best results.

Published weekly by WEEKLY MASSES CO., INC., at 461 Fourth Ave., New York City. Copyright 1940, WEEKLY MASSES CO., INC. Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions $5.00 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months $2.75; three months $1.50; Foreign $6.00 a year; six months $3.25; three months $1.75. In Canada, $5.50 a year, $3.00 for six months. Subscribers are notified that no change in address can be effected in less than two weeks. NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by stamped, addressed envelopes. NEW MASSES does not pay for contributions.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW MASSES

VOLUME XXXVIII DECEMBER 31, 1940 NUMBER 2

Design for Empire

What Mr. Roosevelt's scheme for "lending" arms to Britain means. The president of the Nat'l Industrial Conference Board talks frankly to the bankers. An editorial article.

THE President of the United States seems to think that American foreign policy begins and ends with himself. Whether people disagree with him, and the principles involved in the disagreement, do not seem to matter. Having had *his* say, the President proceeds to act. Observe, for example, what happened to the discussion on loans for Britain. At his first press conference after returning from the Caribbean cruise, Mr. Roosevelt proposed that the United States lend Britain arms, rather than the money with which to buy arms. All orders beyond present contracts would be produced—not for Britain—but for the American government. And the arms won't be sold. They'll be loaned out, secured by a mortgage. They might even be returned after the war is over.

That was his proposal. It came after three weeks of public discussion in which the fact emerged beyond all question that British capitalists have plenty of money around, and plenty of assets convertible into money. Some circles insisted that Britain forfeit part of her real estate in the hemisphere before credits were granted. The liberals so-called, among them Mrs. Roosevelt, dismissed such a sordid thought in a display of great generosity. With the pathetic insolence of small people intoxicated by big money, the editors of the *New Republic* even inquired whether a billion a year, with no strings attached, would do the trick.

THE QUESTION

But in this discussion, millions of humble people were not even heard. To them, the question was *not* whether credits be public or private, *not* whether American capitalists might pick up the Argentine railroads now owned by British capitalists, *not* which islands be bodily transferred from one empire to another. Their question was: Where is this leading? How does it jibe with the President's promise to keep us out of war? Are we not once again paving a familiar and bitter road with gold? Millions of folk were getting a glimpse at the underlying truth that while *they* were being implored to donate a dollar or a rifle or a pint of blood to Britain in the name of democracy, the rulers of America were concerned with the hard, material relations of power, with "trial balances," and "good risks."

Quick to sense the danger, the President steps in. He dismisses the detail of whether the British do, or do not, have the cash. He avoids the possibility of a debate in Congress that might, even in a distorted form, raise the real questions. Congress serves him best as a cash register, and he prefers to present it with an accomplished fact. Then, Mr. Roosevelt takes the wind out of Joseph Kennedy's sails, for he also appears to place "America First." If the munitions are produced for the government, it will not be easy to charge that he is favoring a foreign power. Simultaneously, he averts the disillusion of his liberal friends, his wife included, by sharing their Christmas spirit. We shall eliminate the dollar sign. We shall lend arms, like a garden hose to a needy neighbor. And he even tips his hat to the average man's sense of thrift by suggesting that the arms be returned.

Within three days, the issue is closed. Turner Catledge in the NY *Times* for December 20 says that the British have already submitted a list of their needs, the Cabinet has met upon it; "the matter of political strategy in pushing the aid-scheme quickly through Congress" was discussed; the "British have been told to go ahead with negotiations up to the point of the actual signing of contracts." Finally, says Catledge, "indications were clear that the administration expects to have some plan of British credit-aid worked out . . . before the point is reached where the contracts must be signed. This would be either in the form of a relaxation of the Johnson or Neutrality laws or authorization of the equipment-lending scheme discussed by the President on Tuesday."

This, then, is what is known as the democratic process. The President takes for granted that his word closes the discussion. He simply evades the question which is uppermost in every mind: what do these proposals mean in terms of staying out of war?

Let's try to answer that question. Let's take the idea apart. The President wishes to destroy the popular conviction that bankers and business men are responsible for getting us into war. Instead of permitting private business men to continue the business in murder with Britain, the government will take that business over. Since it is the government of the whole people, and since the people just elected him to a third term, the people will do things for the President they might not care to do for Bethlehem Steel or Boeing Aircraft.

Yet by this very move, he involves the sovereignty of the United States. Every airplane and every gun en route to Britain involves the responsibility of the entire people. The loans remain loans since the people must pay for the government's arms program, all questions of bookkeeping aside. And the way is now opened to the shipment of goods in American boats, convoyed by American cruisers because after all, these are American goods. Placing the chip on the shoulder of the average man, Mr. Roosevelt literally invites Germany to draw the obvious conclusions.

THE CONFIRMATION

But even further. The President is trying to get away with something in the name of the whole nation, in the name of national unity. But actually, he succeeds in undermining the whole concept of national unity. *He succeeds in proving the truth which Marxism has upheld*—the truth which every progressive must learn—*the truth that in the era in which we live the government has come to personify the interests of a small handful of the biggest bankers and industrialists.* Not only in larger aims, but in personnel and even in details, the government has become inextricably bound with the interests of monopoly capital. And it ceases to represent the interests of the people.

Mr. Roosevelt now confirms this truth. It is the logical culmination of everything he has done since his first inauguration. Here is the living process whereby liberals who refuse to recognize the real class relations that govern society, who conceal the reality by imagining that the state stands above classes—this is how they become the architects of fascism. By taking over the business of the capitalists as a whole, Mr. Roosevelt becomes not simply their strategist, but their broker.

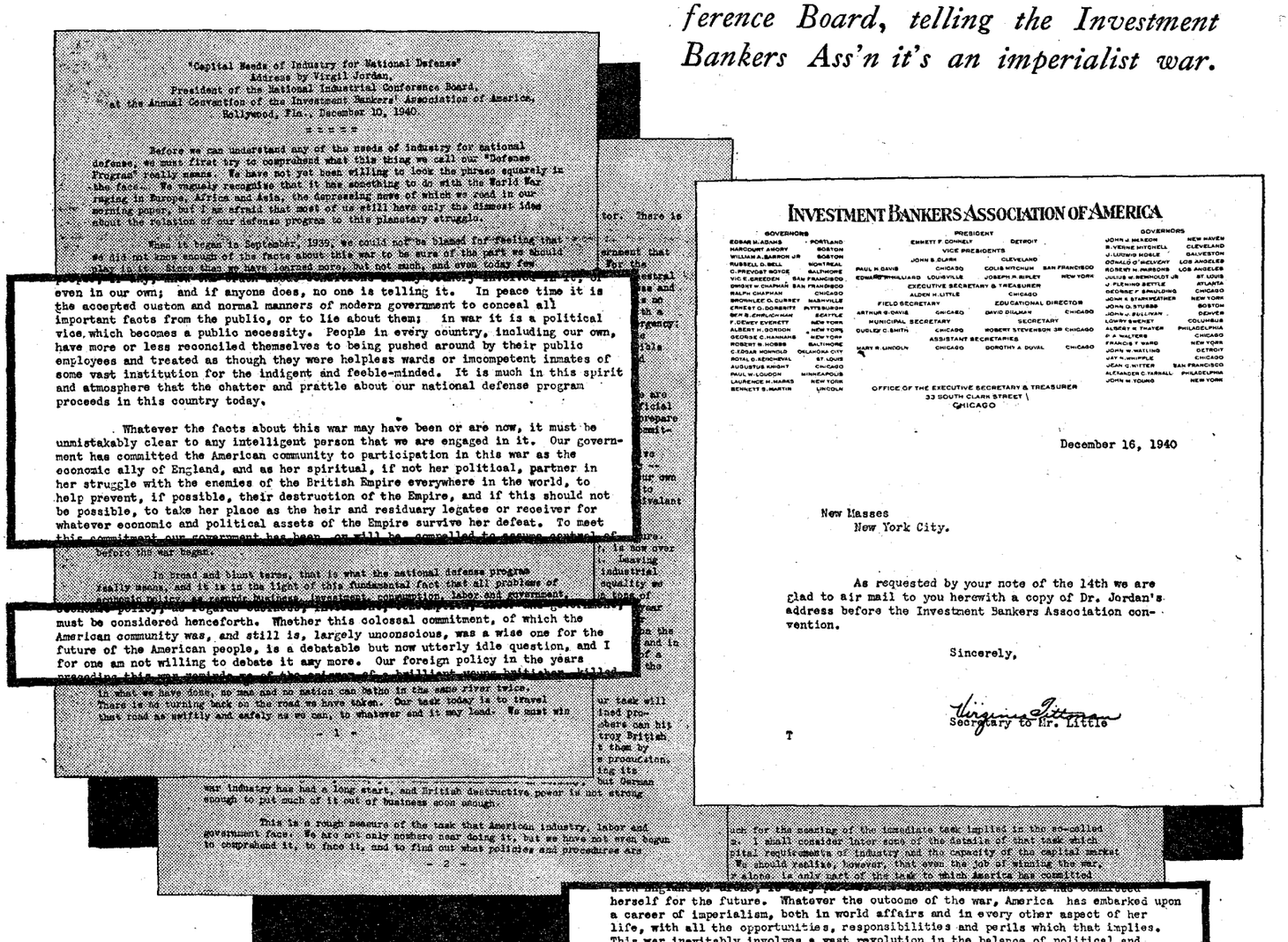
There is something deeper involved, the matter of a "mortgage." A mortgage on what? Characteristically the champions of open diplomacy do not tell us.

And yet it is clear that this proposal culminates a sharp haggling that has been going on between London and Washington for many months. This is what Lord Beaverbrook meant when he spoke of the "battle *for* America," a while back. What has been happening is something like this: Churchill is willing to give up certain imperialist positions, is willing to hold the rising militancy and independence of the British people in check, is willing to reject the continuing offers of peace from Hitler (which are attractive to important sections of his ruling class) but only if Roosevelt comes across with a real

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OUT OF THEIR OWN MOUTHS

Here is the speech of Dr. Virgil Jordan, president of the Nat'l Industrial Conference Board, telling the Investment Bankers Ass'n it's an imperialist war.



'Capital Needs of Industry for National Defense'
Address by Virgil Jordan,
President of the National Industrial Conference Board,
at the Annual Convention of the Investment Bankers' Association of America,
Hollywood, Fla., December 10, 1940.

Before we can understand any of the needs of industry for national defense, we must first try to comprehend what this thing we call our "Defense Program" really means. We have not yet been willing to look the phrase squarely in the face. We vaguely recognize that it has something to do with the World War raging in Europe, Africa and Asia, the depressing news of which we read in our morning paper, but I am afraid that most of us still have only the dimmest idea about the relation of our defense program to this planetary struggle.

When it began in September, 1939, we could not be blamed for feeling that we did not know enough of the facts about this war to be sure of the part we should play in it. Since then we have learned more, but not much, and even today few even in our own; and if anyone does, no one is telling it. In peace time it is the accepted custom and normal manners of modern government to conceal all important facts from the public, or to lie about them; in war it is a political vice which becomes a public necessity. People in every country, including our own, have more or less reconciled themselves to being pushed around by their public employees and treated as though they were helpless wards or imcompetent inmates of some vast institution for the indigent and feeble-minded. It is much in this spirit and atmosphere that the chatter and prattle about our national defense program proceeds in this country today.

Whatever the facts about this war may have been or are now, it must be unmistakably clear to any intelligent person that we are engaged in it. Our government has committed the American community to participation in this war as the economic ally of England, and as her spiritual, if not her political, partner in her struggle with the enemies of the British Empire everywhere in the world, to help prevent, if possible, their destruction of the Empire, and if this should not be possible, to take her place as the heir and residuary legatee or receiver for whatever economic and political assets of the Empire survive her defeat. To meet this commitment our government has been or will be compelled to assume control before the war began.

In broad and blunt terms, that is what the national defense program really means, and it is in the light of this fundamental fact that all problems of must be considered henceforth. Whether this colossal commitment, of which the American community was, and still is, largely unconscious, was a wise one for the future of the American people, is a debatable but now utterly idle question, and I for one am not willing to debate it any more. Our foreign policy in the years

In what we have done, no man and no nation can bathe in the same river twice. There is no turning back on the road we have taken. Our task today is to travel that road as swiftly and safely as we can, to whatever end it may lead. We must win

- 1 -

war industry has had a long start, and British destructive power is not strong enough to put much of it out of business soon enough.

This is a rough measure of the task that American industry, labor and government face. We are not only nowhere near doing it, but we have not even begun to comprehend it, to face it, and to find out what policies and procedures are

- 2 -

INVESTMENT BANKERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

GOVERNORS
EDGAR M. ADAMS — PORTLAND
HARCOURT AMORY — BOSTON
WILLIAM A. BARRON JR — BOSTON
RUSSELL D. BELL — MONTREAL
C. PREVOST BOYCE — BALTIMORE
VIC E. BREEDEN — SAN FRANCISCO
DWIGHT W. CHAPMAN — SAN FRANCISCO
RALPH CHAPMAN — CHICAGO
BROWNLEE O. CURREY — NASHVILLE
ERNEST O. DORRITY — PITTSBURGH
BEN R. EHRLICHMAN — SEATTLE
F. DEWEY EVERETT — NEW YORK
ALBERT H. GORDON — NEW YORK
GEORGE C. HANNAHS — NEW YORK
ROBERT S. HOBBS — BALTIMORE
C. EDGAR HONHOLD — OKLAHOMA CITY
ROYAL D. KENCHEVAL — ST. LOUIS
AUGUSTUS KNIGHT — CHICAGO
PAUL H. LOUDON — MINNEAPOLIS
LAURENCE M. MARKS — NEW YORK
BENNETT S. MARTIN — LINCOLN

PRESIDENT
EMMETT F. CONNELY — DETROIT

VICE PRESIDENTS
JOHN S. CLARK — CLEVELAND
PAUL H. DAVIS — CHICAGO
EDWARD WHITTALL — LOUISVILLE
COLIS HITCHUM — SAN FRANCISCO
JOSEPH M. RIPLEY — NEW YORK

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY & TREASURER
ALDEN H. LITTLE — CHICAGO

FIELD SECRETARY
ARTHUR S. DAVIS — CHICAGO

EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR
DAVID DINAN — CHICAGO

MUNICIPAL SECRETARY
DUDLEY C. SMITH — CHICAGO

SECRETARY
ROBERT STEVENSON 3R — CHICAGO

ASSISTANT SECRETARIES
MARY R. LINCOLN — CHICAGO
DOROTHY A. DUVAL — CHICAGO

GOVERNORS
JOHN J. BLIXEN — NEW HAVEN
R. VERNE MITCHELL — CLEVELAND
J. LUDWIG MOBLE — GALVESTON
DONALD O'MELVENY — LOS ANGELES
ROBERT H. PARSONS — LOS ANGELES
JULIUS M. WEINHOLDT JR — ST. LOUIS
J. FLEMING BETTLE — ATLANTA
GEORGE F. SPAULDING — CHICAGO
JOHN E. STARKWEATHER — NEW YORK
JOHN D. STUBBS — BOSTON
JOHN U. SULLIVAN — DENVER
LOWRY S. WICKET — COLUMBUS
ALBERT W. THAYER — PHILADELPHIA
F. A. WALTERS — CHICAGO
FRANCIS T. WARD — NEW YORK
JOHN W. WATLING — DETROIT
JAY H. WHIPPLE — CHICAGO
JEAN G. WITTER — SAN FRANCISCO
ALEXANDER C. YARNALL — PHILADELPHIA
JOHN M. YOUNG — NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY & TREASURER
33 SOUTH CLARK STREET
CHICAGO

December 16, 1940

New Masses
New York City.

As requested by your note of the 14th we are glad to air mail to you herewith a copy of Dr. Jordan's address before the Investment Bankers Association convention.

Sincerely,

Virginia Stillman
Secretary to Mr. Little

T

herself for the future. Whatever the outcome of the war, America has embarked upon a career of imperialism, both in world affairs and in every other aspect of her life, with all the opportunities, responsibilities and perils which that implies. This war inevitably involves a vast revolution in the balance of political and economic power, not only internationally but internally. Even though, by our aid, England should emerge from this struggle without defeat, she will be so impoverished economically and crippled in prestige that it is improbable she will be able to resume or maintain the dominant position in world affairs which she has occupied so long. At best, England will become a junior partner in a new Anglo-Saxon imperialism, in which the economic resources and the military and naval strength of

the United States will be the center of gravity. Southward in our hemisphere and westward in the Pacific the path of empire takes its way, and in modern terms of economic power as well as political prestige, the sceptre passes to the United States.

What this implies in terms of economic expansion for an indefinite period in the future no one at this time can even imagine. From the pages of British experience, however, we know some of the things that this white man's burden may mean when we assume it. We know that it implies a vast responsibility of assembling, applying and conserving the financial resources upon which it rests. We know, too, from some of the darker pages of British experience in the past century, that it implies an enormous task of expanding and maintaining a vast organization of man-power, machines and equipment, not merely for national defense, but for effective and continuous exercise of international authority in the maintenance of peace and order. We should realize, too, that before this part of our new imperial responsibilities can be performed, they must rest upon the solid and broad base of internal unity and domestic prosperity, which will imply intelligent and courageous reconstruction of our own economic and political life after the immediate war effort is over.

We may be afraid of the unfamiliar and forbidding word, imperialism, in connection with the commitment we have made. We may prefer, in the current American fashion, to disguise it in a vague phrase like "hemisphere defense". But, consciously or unaware, America has been dedicated to that career by its temperament, capacities and resources, and by the drift of world events, not merely in recent years but since the beginning of the century, and certainly since the last war. The confused and often infantile financial adventures of the 20's,

ceivable. We have no alternative, in truth, than to move along the road we have been traveling in the past quarter century, in the direction which we took with the conquest of Cuba and the Phillipines and our participation in the last World War.

All this is what lies beneath the phrase "national defense" -- some of it deeply hidden, some of it very near the surface and soon to emerge to challenge us. Both the immediate task of defending Britain and perhaps saving her from

NEW MASSES asks you to read this page carefully. Compare it with what you've been reading in the newspapers, seeing in the newsreels, hearing on the radio. Ask yourself why such things are being concealed from the American people. Ask yourself whether Dr. Jordan and the men he represents are worth sacrificing for, worth dying for. Get a glimpse into the type of mind that's running the State Department, that occupies the highest offices of the land. And pass the moral of this page around.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and substantial commitment, from which there will be no turning back.

American imperialism, however, wishes to continue its profitable commerce in the preserves of the empire, wishes time for its own rearmament and the fascization of the United States. But it is not prepared to make so binding a commitment that it might be left holding the bag, for example, in case of a decisive German offensive in the spring. There is a real difference in the American ruling class as to how far Roosevelt should go. There are doubts as to whether the British can lick Hitler and still hold capitalism together on the continent of Europe. Not everyone shares the President's confidence that Hitler can be defeated, the advance of socialism rebuffed, and the American people hypnotized all at the same time.

The crucial fact about the President's proposal therefore is that Churchill has been given an assurance, which increases his reliance upon the United States but at the same time dispels doubts about our future course. On the other hand, by taking direct control over "aid to Britain" in its new form, the President can also "ration it" if necessary, can use it as a diplomatic weapon if his calculations go wrong.

Thus, the *Financial News,* organ of London's City, is reported to have reacted to the latest scheme as follows: "While in recent months the Washington administration has been assuming that the United States can exert its full weight in international affairs without any reduction in the high standards of living enjoyed by Americans this mirage is now fast fading . . . we may expect, [these gentlemen mince no words] speedy enforcement of national control necessary for a full war effort." Notice the word "war."

And Walter Lippmann, with his usual insight, declares on December 19:

> This plan—whether it be based on leasing or lending equipment—will, if properly negotiated, be secured not merely by the financial resources of the British Empire but by what is much more valuable to us—the fleet and airforce of the empire. Under this plan, Mr. Churchill's pledge of last June never to surrender the British fleet can be considerably strengthened. For we shall establish a lien upon an increasing part of the fighting equipment of the British, and while—supposing the worst—we could not get back what Hitler might capture, we could exert a very strong pull upon the disposal of anything which a victorious Hitler could not actually lay his hands on . . ."

So much for the international significance of this latest development. The domestic significance is just as important, and much more obvious. Under the slogan of getting "everybody to work for the government," Mr. Roosevelt can accomplish what the admirals, the National Association of Manufacturers, the poll-tax congressmen, and every other labor-hater have been demanding for weeks. As it is, the government has virtually emasculated the Wagner act; the Wage-Hour Act is under fire; Mr. Knudsen has proposed scrapping the five-day week. And all through the country the public opinioneers are whipping the air with their talk of sacrifice, twenty-four-hour-a-day production, etc. Production is, of course, at a higher level than 1929; it is only in the consumers goods industries that production is lagging behind, and it is the precise program of big business, through their priorities policy, to curtail the raw material supply of all manufacturing concerns inessential to war. Then there is another fraud: the cry of labor shortage. There is, of course, no labor shortage in the country: there are upwards of 9,000,000 unemployed, of whom at least 4,000,000 are skilled and semi-skilled workers. What big business is trying to achieve here is free rein for the introduction of labor-saving devices on a large scale, at the same time breaking down labor standards and unionization in the mass production industries. True enough, there are differences within big business, and within the administration as to how, and how far, these things shall be done. But the great danger in the President's latest aid-to-Britain plan is that these things can be accomplished under the compulsion of a spurious "national unity." And if the President seems to disagree for the moment with the impatient professors who demand the declaration of a state of full national emergency, or the most outspoken industrialists who are a little ahead of the game, that's only because his motto is: "If you don't rush me, boys, I'll do the job myself."

But a great many people, perhaps even friends of NEW MASSES, will come back to the old refrain. After all, democracy and liberty, our way of life is at stake. The *New Republic* said last week that the "two great repositories of democracy (should) pool their leadership in brains, vision, and courage."

To such people we have replied: that is not so. The men who rule America are not interested in democracy or liberty. This is a war of rival imperialisms on a vast scale, a war which is aimed at the American people no less than the colonial peoples, and ultimately the socialist world. We have argued that the real choice for which we must work is not the victory of either imperialism, but the victory of the common people in all warring lands.

Many people have agreed. Others reserve their doubts. For they are themselves so honorable that they cannot believe what we say of the hardboiled men who rule America. It so happens that last week we came upon the evidence from the horse's mouth. It is a speech by Dr. Virgil Jordan, president of the National Industrial Conference Board, made before the Investment Bankers Association in Hollywood, Fla., on December 10. Dr. Jordan was once a liberal, wrote for the *New Republic,* and for the last sixteen years or so has been reckoned among the foremost bourgeois economists. The National Industrial Conference Board is the top-flight research organization for the American capitalist class, financed by a few of the biggest companies to serve them all. Here he is, talking to his employers, from whom he conceals no secrets, for whom his word is expert advice. And what does the good doctor say?

> Before we can understand any of the needs of industry for national defense, we must first try to comprehend what this thing we call our "Defense Program" really means. . . .
>
> When it began in September 1939, we could not be blamed for feeling that we did not know enough of the facts about this war to be sure of the part we should play in it. Since then we have learned more, but not much, and even today few people, if any, know the truth about conditions in any country involved in it, or even in our own; and if anyone does, no one is telling it. *In peace time it is the accepted custom and normal manners of modern government to conceal all important facts from the public, or to lie about them; in war it is a political vice which becomes a public necessity. . . .*
>
> Whatever the facts about this war may have been, or are now, it must be unmistakably clear to any intelligent person that we are engaged in it. *Our government has committed the American community to participation in this war as the economic ally of England, and as her spiritual, if not her political, partner in her struggle with the enemies of the British empire everywhere in the world, to help prevent, if possible, their destruction of the Empire, and if this should not be possible, to take her place as the heir and residuary legatee or receiver for whatever economic and political assets of the Empire survive her defeat. . . .*
>
> Whether this colossal commitment, of which the American community was, and still is, largely unconscious, was a wise one for the future of the American people, is a debatable but now utterly idle question, and I for one am not willing to debate it any more. . . . *Whatever the outcome of the war, America has embarked upon a career of imperialism, both in world affairs and in every other aspect of her life, with all the opportunities, responsibilities and perils which that implies. . . .* Even though, by our aid, England should emerge from this struggle without defeat, she will be so impoverished economically and crippled in prestige that it is improbable she will be able to resume or maintain the dominant position in world affairs which she has occupied so long. *At best, England will become a junior partner in a new Anglo-Saxon imperialism, in which the economic resources and the military and naval strength of the United States will be the center of gravity. Southward in our hemisphere and westward in the Pacific the path of empire takes its way, and in modern terms of economic power as well as political prestige, the sceptre passes to the United States. . . .*
>
> We have no alternative, in truth, than to move along the road we have been traveling in the past quarter century, in the direction which we took with *the conquest of Cuba and the Philippines and our participation in the last World war. . . .*
>
> All this is what lies beneath the phrase "national defense"—some of it deeply hidden, some of it very near the surface and soon to emerge to challenge us.

Such is the outrageously cynical perspective of the innermost circles of the American ruling class. And note, that by contrast with the press, they do not even mention the word "democracy" once, for it is their "accepted custom and normal manners to conceal all important facts from the public or lie about them." Is it for these men, and such ideals, that Americans are being asked to give their lives?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We Made Laguna a Garden

Joseph North visits the famous Mexican cottonlands where peasants till the land cooperatively. The plottings of reaction. "We must organize a counter-offensive," the Indian woman said.

Torreon.

THIS is the city Pancho Villa loved. You come upon it in a creeping train that fills with the white dust of Coahuila after descending from the dizzy mountains of Zacatecas. You are surprised how like an American town it is, and if it were not for the palms and the Spanish signs you feel you might be stopping off in an Arizona city. The chalky mountains tower over the railroad and a big wooden cross stands atop the highest peak. From the railroad station to the central plaza the markets teem with people, sombreroed men and women in the ubiquitous shawls, buying what they can of oranges, white onions, tomatoes, peanuts. They count their centavos out carefully and jog off in their tennis shoes to cook a meal for an entire family that one man in the United States could eat by himself.

THE SINARQUISTAS

Our friend, the agronomist, grew a little more excited when the train neared Torreon, which, he said, was "an oasis after this desert." We had got here after a day and night's travel across rocky Zacatecas where the fanatical *Sinarquistas* were on the rampage again, stirred up by the medieval clergy and indigenous fascist demagogues. (The conductor had pulled down the window blinds as the train puffed up the slopes during the night.) The agronomist told us about these *Sinarquistas* as the train passed through a fantastically brilliant Zacatecas sunset with its majestic reds, its pale greens, its overwhelming yellows, and the velvet black overhead. We knew this reactionary peasant movement had been nurtured by the slowdown of the land distribution of the past two years. The Cardenas regime's failure to continue the agrarian reform since 1937 had stirred up these hungry peasants. They struck out in the only way they knew: terrorism in the countryside, some taking to banditry. This land is bleak and bad with the crazy cactus prickling up through the horizon, and hour after hour there is nothing but semi-desert. This is Mexico, too, the greater part of the acreage, arid, dusty, not enough for a beast to scratch out a living. And suddenly there is Torreon, the white buildings looming like a mirage through the desert heat, the great metallurgical plant's smokestacks eerily thrusting out against the sky. All about it—La Laguna, the lands that spring to life when the Nazas and Aguanaval rivers pour down their deep river-beds, totally dry most of the year.

"The soil here," the young agronomist said proudly, "is as good as that along the Nile. Experiments conducted several years ago proved that." This agricultural area is peopled by some 45,000 cooperatively organized peasants, and was the center of Mexico's agrarian reform. It was Cardenas' proudest boast. We were going to see La Conchita (The Little Shell), one of the most significant settlements out on the plain near the western mountains and we were to visit Conchita Roja (The Little Red Shell), another *ejido* (collective farm), to attend some classes in the rural schools, talk to the farmers and their families. For Mexico is seventy percent agrarian. These were the people who, in alliance with the industrial proletariat, always decisive, would play the determining role in Mexico's destiny. And of all the farmers, we were told, those on the Laguna were most advanced.

THE COTTON PICKERS

Five foreign land companies had been overlords here in Coahuila and Durango, through which the Laguna runs. In the years from 1920 to 1936 they had netted more than a quarter billion pesos. These "earnings" had been wrung from farmhands who endured conditions as bad as anywhere in the globe. You suddenly understand why they had followed Pancho Villa, why Zapata's cry—*"Tierra y Libertad"*—Land and Liberty, had been a magic slogan for them. Here up to 1936 the death rate, as in all of Mexico, had been the highest in the world. The agronomist told us of the great Laguna strike back in 1936 when cotton pickers on over a hundred giant plantations had struck for essentials that the *hacendados* considered luxuries—medical services, housing better than a dog kennel, a few pesos more a month. Corrupt state tribunals had declared the strike illegal—and the *hacendados'* pluguglies—known as the White Guards—had shot peasant leaders down. It was out of this strike that the remarkable leader of the Mexican Communist Party had emerged, Dionisio Encina, whose name is spoken reverently among the thousands here. He had been head of the strike. The agronomist told me that here Cardenas had performed one of his firmest actions on behalf of the people. He had had the strikebreakers expelled, the White Guards ousted, and had ordered the immediate distribution of the cotton lands.

This Laguna area consists of some 350,000 acres of cotton land, intensively irrigated. In 1936 it was turned over to some 30,000 cooperatively organized peasants; but some 10,000 to 15,000 more have trickled in since that time. It had also been the scene of violent imperialist intrigue and formerly the Tlahualilo Land Co.—a British concern—had flagrantly broken the laws of the land by deflecting the flood waters of the Nazas River, thus bankrupting the small cotton farmers of Coahuila. When the Mexicans protested, took it to their supreme court, the American ambassador himself came to the aid of the British to prevent the establishment of a precedent which would rebound against all imperialist interests. This was in President Madero's time.

THE EJIDAL BANK

And now the peasants were supposed to run the land cooperatively, with the aid of the Ejidal Bank set up by the Cardenas administration to help with credit, to guide the production. The fact, of course, was that this great attempt was taking place within a capitalist framework. Thus all manner of sabotage was rife; plus the fact that the Ejidal Bank itself was almost a pauper in its credit facilities. Unfortunately, the Constitution's agrarian provisions permitted the *hacendados* to retain up to 350 acres of irrigated land plus the machinery and equipment. I came across islands of land within the cooperatively run farms, that belong to the old, hostile, rock-ribbed *propriedadores,* who have bided their time, plotting behind the scenes to get the land.

We saw them, in their brand new Fords and Chevrolets, driving fast past the peasant on donkey back. When the plantations were expropriated many big landowners sabotaged the irrigation works, let the water flood the lands. They sold whatever could be moved abroad, so that the peasant could have no benefit of their machinery. And they have worked indefatigably to subvert the gains of the Cardenas period. These are bourgeoisie of the countryside, who, in league with the biggest business interests, are out to destroy completely the progressive organizations of Mexico.

Our agronomist explained all this, shaking his head at the prospects for tomorrow. "But what the peasant has achieved despite all these heartbreaking circumstances!" he said. "What he could do if his hands weren't tied." Two hundred new wells had been drilled in the area, he told us, and the cotton yields per acre had increased 77 percent in the one year of 1937-38.

So this was La Laguna. A vast, dusty plain encircled by a mountain chain; subterranean streams of the Nazas and Aguanaval rivers nourished the seed. Irrigation ditches bore life-giving water to the furthest reaches of the area.

The agronomist took us to the *ejido* known as La Paz—Peace. The farmers lived in rows of adobe huts, working approximately 3,000 acres. We examined the Cooper-Bessemer Corp. pumps which come from Grove City, Pa., talked to the farmers, asked them how things were.

"They have been better," they said. "Still,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they are not too bad." They said it was a damn sight better than in the days of the *hacendados*. They seemed to know the economics of their venture. We talked to a few men in patched jeans, who had been there since the lands were expropriated. They knew how much the cotton sold for—in fact, they were pretty experienced in their bookkeeping. They didn't like the idea that the private landowners had sold their cotton yield at sixty-one pesos several months ago and that the *ejidatarios*—working through the bank—had not been able to sell at the same time. The price now was fifty-six. They knew too that the Ejidal Bank was not doing so well, that it had to borrow money this past year to afford them their necessary allotments. They said the Ejidal Bank got the money from big American and English interests—"Anderson y Clayton." We later learned the foreign bank was controlling the marketing of the cotton. These two peasants put great faith in Cardenas. He would continue to help them even though he was going out of office, they thought. They weren't so sure about Camacho. They didn't think *imperialismo Yanqui* would dare make inroads again.

The peasants said they worked from six in the morning till three in the afternoon. "When the sun burns the least," one said.

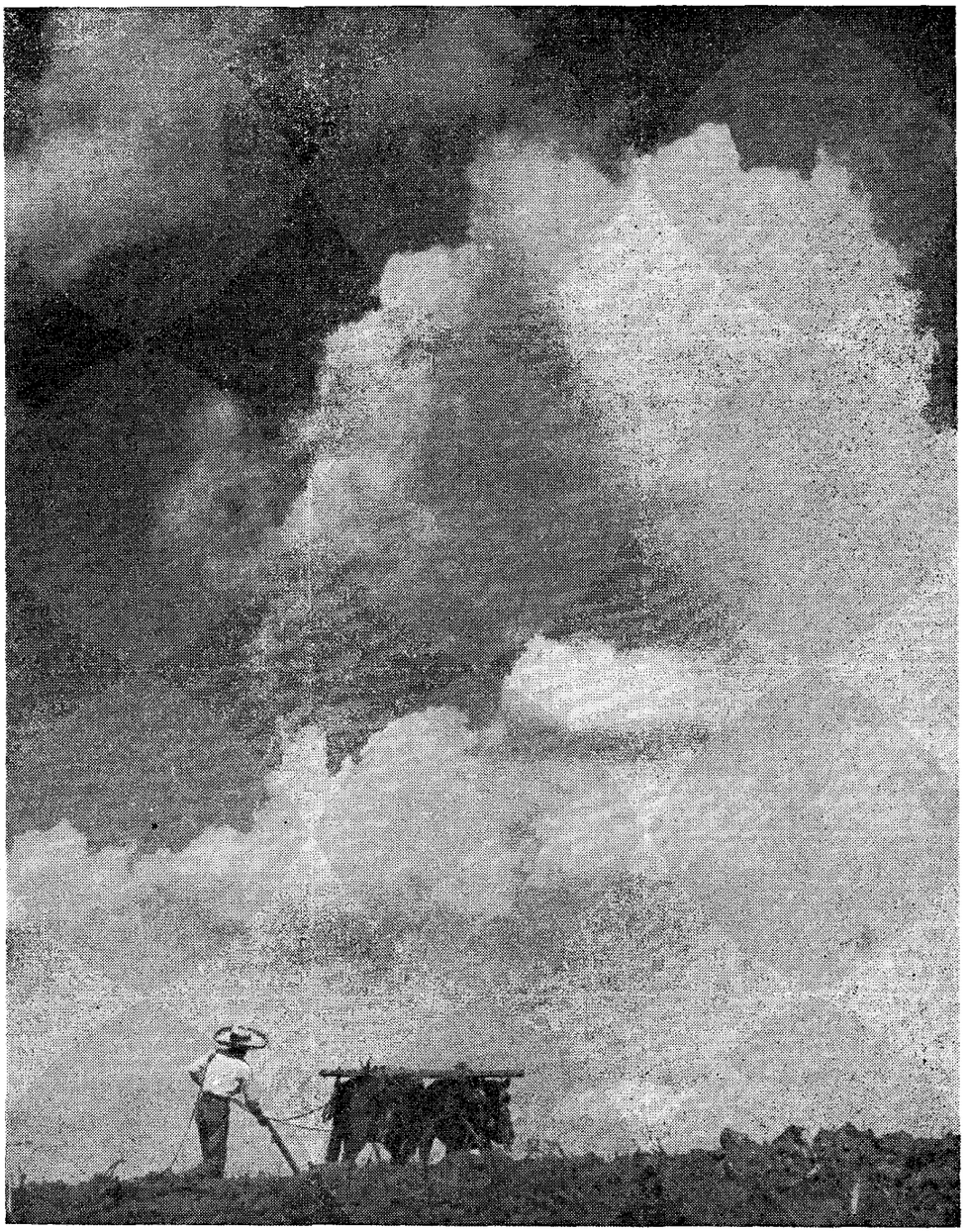
From here we went over to the neighboring *ejido,* called Coyote. There we began to get a clear picture of what was happening, what was meant by the "gains" of the Revolution. The women proudly led us to a long adobe hut in which they had their dearest possession, the electrically operated mill to grind their corn.

"Before, we had to work all day long pounding the corn and the pulp for our frijoles and tortillas," Marcellina Gomez told us. "Now this machine," she said happily, "has liberated us from slavery." She showed us how it works, pouring the grains of corn into a funnel. The apparatus began to churn and the corn emerged in a pliant mass. "In one hour the entire village can grind its corn for the day, and before all day long we women worked at it." She said it took only a liter of gas a day to run the dynamo of the mill. Each family paid four centavos for each kilo ground. "The machine cost us 1,500 pesos," she said. "We have paid a thousand off and we have had it two years. By next year we hope to own it."

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

These machines were owned by the *"Ligas Feminilas,"* cooperative organization of the *ejidal* women. They were very proud of their machinery, happy in the liberation it afforded them. They considered this one of the finest features of the agrarian reform that happened under Cardenas.

On the walls about the mill were posters graphically portraying the horrors of syphilis, gonorrhea, alcoholism, tuberculosis, and in simple sentences telling what could be done about these ancient diseases. "The infant mortality here used to be 60 percent before the



ejidos, when we were under the latifundists," she said. "It's been cut down to 40 percent now. We have eighteen medical centers in Laguna. Before, we used to have our babies at home, where many of them came into the world dead. Now we have them in hospitals where they take good care of us."

The next day in Torreon we attended the session of the Central Committee of the Woman's Leagues of the Laguna, one of the most fascinating gatherings, and yet heartrending I had ever attended. The women had come from scores of miles away, by bus, by burro, and some afoot. Three of them had nobody to mind their children and they brought their tiny, black-eyed *muchachos* along with them.

It was in the basement of an old villa, their meeting place, and they could get it only after great difficulties. For reasons which were explained to us afterward, the authorities were none too eager for the meeting.

I noticed a bag of seed lying on the table at the front of the room, lying like a squat idol of Montezuma's day. The women kept eyeing it eagerly. The little Indian woman in the lavender sweater who was chairman of the meeting said it was vegetable seed, vegetables that didn't grow in these parts. It was to be distributed after the meeting—a few handfuls each to the twenty women who were leaders in this great community of some 45,000 farmers. "A *companero* just returned from the capital," she said, from Mexico City far away over the mountains of Zacatecas and Guerrero, "and returned with this trophy from the government." For centuries they had planted maize—corn—for the eternal tortilla and frijole—and they were hungry to plant the new foods in their little plots some of them ran cooperatively. Our agronomist had often talked to the peasants of the need for a varied crop and had urged upon the women the need of a varied diet and these little Indian women understood by this time that our agronomist knew what he was talking about. My friend, the farm expert, a graduate of the famous agricultural school at Chapingo, outside Mexico City, was a young man of thirty-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

six, well-known and respected by these ejidal farmers. He was with them, they knew, and he was welcome at this meeting of the Central Committee, and anybody he brought with him was welcome too. They had many vexing problems to discuss but our presence did not inhibit them in the slightest. They knew we did not represent the governor of the state, a man who was not anxious for them to meet.

Picture this large bare basement, with windows opening on the street through which you could see the bare feet of the children of Torreon as they walked by. Twenty women, most of them Indian, clad in the traditional simple shawl; black plaits, handsome dark eyes, some of them wizened old women, others young girls, and several mothers whose babies crawled around on the floor during the long all-day session. A cup of coffee for breakfast and nothing during the day, the women sat there in a well organized meeting, making their points, debating their views, for all the world like a session of seasoned trade unionists. "All of them have learned to read and write only since the expropriation," the agronomist told me. One mother nursed her baby under her shawl, at the same time jotting notes in a notebook on her knee. The problems they discussed quite clearly rose from the offensive of reaction in the country. "I am a woman from Durango," one said, "and they have taken a teacher away from us we all want back." Another rose to say, "I am from Tlualila. They want to take away our teacher who knows our children best; we want her back." Woman after woman made the same statement. "I come from Coyote," a little dark Indian woman in spectacles said. "I propose we send a delegation to the president himself telling him what is happening here." The motion was passed unanimously. "The new president," one of them said as an afterthought. "The new one, Avila Camacho."

Reaction was on the wing. The most beloved schoolteachers of the region, women who had toiled with them since the 1936 strike when they had gotten their *ejidos,* were being mysteriously removed, transferred from the areas they loved. And these women here knew why. Their politics were not to the liking of the governor, Gen. Pedro V. Rodriguez Triana. "And more like him in Mexico City," one said.

These soft-spoken little women were fighting desperately to retain their gains, victories that meant the difference to them between a life of hope or one like the old.

Repeatedly they discussed the *molino,* the little mills that ground their corn for them, released them from the bondage of wasted hours pounding the kernel into a pulp for their tortillas. The new machine did it in a few minutes for an entire village. The Women's Leagues often centered about this machine. They toiled for it, saved their centavos, grew flowers and other small things they could sell in order to buy the mill which they worked cooperatively.

"And now," the woman from Durango again, "they want to take our mill away." The woman from Tlualila said, "The governor doesn't want us to be freed. He knows the mill saves us time, allows us several hours to hold meetings, to organize other women in the village. That's why they want to rob us of our machines."

A third woman rose to say that the men in her village were holding a meeting tomorrow to discuss the mill. "The priest has been talking to them. He has been telling them that the mill is a thing of evil. It takes us out of the home and we should grind our corn in the house, he says. Many of our men are heeding the priest. We must carry on a campaign to convince our men that the mill is a good and necessary thing." They passed a resolution to defend their mill. "Let us all go to the meeting of the men in our village tomorrow and explain our point of view," the little Indian woman in spectacles said. They passed that resolution unanimously.

Another woman rose to attack the padre in her village. "He is organizing rival women's clubs to ours. He does everything he can to stop us. He even sells perfume in his parish at lower prices than you can get it in the stores. We must counteract the work of the priests who want to smash our organization." A tiny woman, haggard with wrinkles, rose to say she thought the priest ought to be driven from the village with sticks and stones. The others debated that course, voted her down. "We cannot win that way. We can only win by convincing our women and men that they must not heed the padre," said the little chairwoman, the woman in a lavender sweater.

The Indian woman in the glasses rose again. She proposed that the women organize a counter-offensive to the drive against their organization. "Let us send out a questionnaire to all the villages and ask the women if they have the following: one, a sewing machine for common use; two, a *molino* for the corn; three, a radio for the village; four, a plot of land to grow vegetables in common." All thought this was a good idea and it passed unanimously. Another proposed that a fifth point be added: the right of the villagers to retain the teachers they wanted. Unanimously adopted. And so the meeting went.

Here it was clear before you. The people were defending their hard-earned gains. They were not taking the drive of reaction fatalistically. They were fighting. The meeting of these women was symbolic.

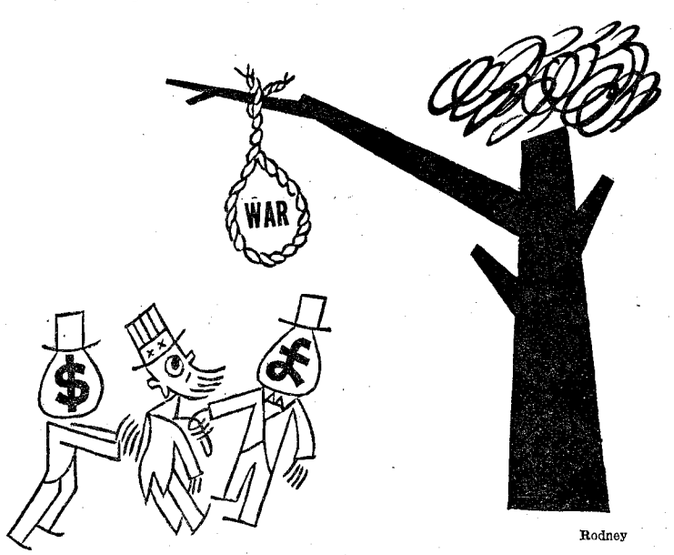
The agronomist told me they were typical: that the peasants would surrender their gains only with their lives. True, there were big men in Mexico City plotting to end the agrarian reform. True, the Americans were driving hard bargains, seeking to halt further expropriation of lands. And at the end of 1938, the land reform had benefited less than half of the peasants hungering for the soil. As far as I could gather, the *ejidatarios* had 23,600,000 hectares (over two and a quarter acres to a hectare) while approximately 20,000,000 hectares still belong to small and middle farmers. The big landowners still have their claws on 87,000,000 hectares. And they mean to hold on. Hence, their incessant intrigues to scuttle the land reform, to turn back the clock. President Avila Camacho's recent decree giving title of the *ejidatorio's* lands to individuals is a wedge in the direction of the past. Title to the land is not of itself bad. But it may be used as a maneuver to undermine cooperative ways of work, to sap the organizational forms of the peasantry. If the small farmers return to individualistic methods, they will be confronted singly, one by one, with the question of credits. They will need to resort to loans once again: they are in danger of falling into the clutches of the well-to-do farmers and the banks.

This is the great danger to the *ejidal* farmers; this is the menace to the gains of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 fought bloodily over the land from Yucatan to Texas.

But it is no easy task to subvert the demands of a whole people. This one session of the women of the Laguna carried a deep moral. The peasant will not surrender quietly. He will fight for his hard-won soil, will battle for the gains of the past thirty years.

As the little Indian woman in spectacles said at the meeting in Torreon: "We must organize a counter-offensive."

JOSEPH NORTH.



Rodney

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Plot Against the Youth

Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt would like to hamstring the American Youth Congress. Bruce Minton exposes the plan of the ISS. A scheme to corral our young people into Hitler-like camps.

A NEW plan for the regimentation of the youth of the country is now in the making. The Roosevelt administration and the financial and industrial great stand behind the plan. It calls for compulsory work camps in which young people will labor for subsistence wages that will help undermine the standards of the trade unions. Working through deserters from the American Youth Congress and the American Student Union, the promoters of this scheme aim to set up a dual youth organization in order to divide the progressive youth movement and lure America's young men and women into supporting the administration's war policy.

The story starts last February when the best representatives of American youth stood shivering in the cold rain on the White House lawn to hear President Roosevelt tell them that their ideas on war and peace were "twaddle." From that moment on the battle lines were drawn. The administration and the men of power in this country and all those who hover around the powerful realized that American youth would not willingly cooperate in the strategy of war and oppression. It was necessary to disrupt such organizations as the American Youth Congress and the American Student Union and impose the kind of "discipline" which the fascist dictatorships have found so useful. Early in the summer the President and Mrs. Roosevelt began talking about "universal service" for all young men and women when they reached twenty-one, some to be trained in military camps, others in work camps, still others in industry. At once serious opposition to this idea manifested itself within Congress and among the people; the proposal was temporarily pushed into the background while all efforts were concentrated on forcing through the conscription bill. But unobtrusively the ground was likewise being prepared for the compulsory work camp plan. The real trick was to utilize already existing organizations which would attract little suspicion, to give them fresh content, to pour new wine into old bottles.

THE ISS

There was, for example, the International Student Service, set up immediately after the Armistice in 1918 for the purpose of rehabilitating students in war-torn Europe. Long past, in 1925, its task had ended. But the ISS did not disband; instead it continued a limited activity promoting international fellowship, publishing academic tracts on world student problems, conducting an international work camp in Switzerland where young men and women from many nations came together and worked and discussed their problems. It was innocuous and friendly. The ISS puttered along without creating a stir, until 1933 when the League of Nations Committee for Refugees turned over to it the problem of German student refugees. The International Student Service finally had a function. It carried out its duties in what was on the whole a progressive manner.

But by the fall of 1939, the world scene shifted. The ISS shifted with it. The outbreak of the war prevented conferences among the youth of Europe. The American section of the ISS had the burden of keeping the program alive. But in this country the spirit of the conferences changed. Now the ISS became a forum for war, concerned not with the maintenance of peace for America but with discussing ways and means of achieving a "lasting peace"—after the war was over, after the Allies had won the war *with the help of the United States*. The conferences became platforms for the William Allen White committee, organizing audiences to forward aid to Great Britain, urging intervention in Europe's conflict, proposing to "save democracy" by plunging this country into the imperialist struggle. As though to emphasize its role, the ISS refused to help Spanish anti-fascist students held in French concentration camps; instead it concentrated on Finnish students who made good newspaper copy and whose "cases" could be used as propaganda against socialism and the Soviet Union—and against those who advocated peace for the United States.

Nevertheless, the International Student Service remained a dead letter. It had no membership. It performed no useful function. It played no part in American life. Still, if revived, it could perhaps be useful. The administration took the matter under consideration. Some method must be found to disrupt the American Youth Congress and the American Student Union, both of which organizations refused to knuckle under. Out of the blue, the ISS became the center of attentive concern. Mrs. Roosevelt, whose interest in youth had changed from gracious helpfulness to political wire-pulling, anxiously desired to resuscitate the ISS. Ingrid Warburg, niece of the late banker Felix Warburg, with a large fortune carefully smuggled out of Germany, began to give money to the ISS. The knitters for Britain with husbands in Wall Street followed suit. But what really indicated that something was up was the arrival of three ISS representatives at the July conference of the American Youth Congress.

The delegation was composed of Robert Spivak, Irwin Ross, and Mrs. Eliot D. Pratt, best characterized as a "Gene Tunney youth" of some forty years. The ISS group was seated. Mr. Ross made a few remarks during the discussion of the compulsory draft bill then before Congress. "I am not for conscription," said Mr. Ross, "but I think we need military service and perhaps it should be compulsory."

RENEGADE LASH

More significant than the ISS contribution to the discussion was the attention lavished on the delegation by Joseph P. Lash, who had formerly been influential in the Youth Congress. He had broken with his colleagues when the AYC refused to turn itself over to the President. Now Mr. Lash was busy trying to destroy what he could not control, to tie the few he hoped to split off from the Congress to the administration. He was known to be the white-haired boy of the White House, who lived a good part of his time at Hyde Park, where in exchange for information he was able to bring to his patrons he was flattered and scolded in turn by Mrs. Roosevelt. To give some justification for the support he received from the Roosevelts, Lash supposedly was preparing to write a tome on the philosophic outlook of the President. In the meantime, he was being schooled by his elders, groomed as an informer and disrupter extraordinary. Of course, everyone at the Congress knew where Lash stood.

The suspicions were well founded. The ISS was busily at work. It had suddenly taken a great interest in a small organization calling itself Work Camps for America. Originally, this outfit had been known as Work Camps for Democracy. It had been set up early in 1939 with the purpose of doing something for refugee youth in this country. Under its auspices, a work camp had been founded at Hudson Shore Labor School, New York, in August 1939, where twenty refugees and thirty-eight young Americans had gathered for work and study. The camp had been a mild success, progressive in tone. Mrs. Roosevelt had visited it, had advised the campers that "All young people should cooperate with the American Youth Congress." That was before the war.

The campers had set up a standing committee and elected young, handsome, ambitious Robert Lane as chairman. Lane's father was head of a prosperous charitable agency in New York, a man of means. And though Robert Lane had not pleased most of the group by the time the camp ended, that seemed insufficient reason to replace him. The camp broke up, with hopes for further camps in the coming year.

Robert Lane, the not-too-satisfactory chairman, found himself for the moment without a job. But that did not last long. The American Youth Commission came to him and suggested that he go to Washington to raise

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

money for future camps. Lane assented eagerly. He went on the Commission's payroll. And thereby the American Youth Commission gave Work Camps for Democracy a helping hand. The Commission, it might be added, was a private organization headed by Owen D. Young, former chief of General Electric, and financed in large part by the Rockefeller Foundation. It spent its energy making surveys of the National Youth Administration, the CCC, and other work-camp projects. Labor was represented on its board by Matthew Woll; big business held the rest of the seats. Always after studying its surveys, the Commission arrived at important conclusions. Unlike the American Youth Congress, which demanded that the unemployed be put to work at prevailing wages, the Commission felt that youth should be satisfied with pay of $400 a year. Such proposals seemed to explain why Owen D. Young, Matthew Woll, and their cohorts were so interested in Work Camps for Democracy.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Robert Lane was not concerned with ulterior motives. In Washington, he abruptly changed the name of his organization to Work Camps for America. He had no sanction to do so, any more than he was empowered to appoint an executive committee. But power or not, Lane acted. The executive committee was important. It was composed of Mary Jeanne McKay, opportunist pro-war administration apologist on the staff of the National Youth Administration; Elmore Jackson, representing the American Friends Service Committee; Algernon Black of the Ethical Culture Society; Ken Holland of the CCC staff; Ingrid Warburg; Eliot Pratt, husband of the lady who had visited the AYC conference; and Katherine Deeny, who actually represented the campers.

Of this executive committee, Lane, Holland, Miss Warburg, Miss McKay, and Pratt were also influential members of the ISS. At this time, however, the interlocking interests could be passed off as coincidental. Nothing much came out of the new board at first. Lane continued in Washington, unable to raise money, spending his time busily writing a pamphlet on the work camp movement.

Finally, Lane returned to New York. He set up offices, borrowed money, and ran into debt. By the spring of 1940, the executive of Work Camps for America decided to put new life into the project. It met, incorporated the organization, planned three camps for that summer. But those attending the camps showed little respect for Lane's advice, rejecting his advocacy of the compulsory draft bill then being considered by Congress, and his plea for support of Great Britain. Instead they sent twenty members to the meeting in Chicago of the Emergency Peace Mobilization.

While Lane had little influence among the campers, he was busy with his own maneuvering. Without consulting the membership, he discussed possibilities of getting ISS to take over Work Camps. Mrs. Roosevelt stepped in at this point to offer her enthusiastic approval. She and Mrs. Pratt sent out invitations to a dinner for Work Camps, supposedly to raise money for that organization. But for some reason the collection at the dinner was muffed—some said deliberately—and though the wealth of New York turned out, only $2,000 was raised. The sum was insufficient. So insufficient that there seemed no alternative but to affiliate Work Camps with ISS.

Elaborate negotiations over the merger ensued. The details are not too vital, but significantly, before the merger was sanctioned, Robert Lane had moved into the ISS office in charge of work camps with a salary of $2,000 a year, and Joseph Lash had been hired by ISS as general secretary at $4,000 a year. Pressure by Mrs. Roosevelt, Ingrid Warburg, Mr. and Mrs. Pratt continued on Work Camps to merge. It was finally arranged. ISS with no membership had inherited at least a semblance of an organization and it had a new purpose in life—to run work camps and to mobilize youth.

Having swallowed Work Camps, the ISS was now all set to invade the youth movement, to confuse and disrupt, to mislead and —so it was hoped—persuade American youth to follow the administration's fifes and drums into war. Indeed, so elated did the ISS promoters feel that they saw horizons broader even than the extermination of organized opposition to war and reaction.

The popularization of work camps offered wide vistas. The ISS had now entered the field. On the one hand it planned to make a success of voluntary camps wherein youth could be herded, drawing off a large section of AYC membership. On the other, at Kansas State University, a new organization sprang up overnight, known as Democracy's Volunteers, sponsored by New Yorkers. Peculiarly, *three of the sponsors are ISS members.* And the main demand of Democracy's Volunteers is for government-run work camps. By popularizing the work camps idea, the ISS hopes to raise the cry in the near future through the press and radio for congressional legislation setting up government camps. It will be "the will of the people." Remember the compulsory draft. That, too, was "the will of the people."

Merely to warn that Congress may authorize government work camps does not tell the whole story. Many honest people support the idea of voluntary work camps. But, at this moment, the step from *voluntary* to *compulsory* camps is not a great one. And this particular voluntary camp organization has as its real purpose the establishment of compulsory camps. It happened in Germany. They are trying to make it happen here.

Nor is this a remote possibility. Already the government has organized a work camp in Vermont, ballyhooed by New England newspapers, pointed to as the solution for the problems of the young. Students have been persuaded to leave colleges to participate in the Vermont experiment, where wages are set far below those in industry. Already the cry is raised that similar government camps should be spread far and wide, that the Vermont example points to a cure for this country's ills. A group at Harvard is organizing another such camp, persuading honest people that there is no ulterior motive behind the project. But admitted or not, the motive is there, similar to that which actuates the directors of the ISS.

ANTI-UNION STANDARDS

In her October 31 column, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote: "The CCC and NYA should cover every boy and girl coming out of school who is not able to obtain work in private industry, or who is not called to service under the selective draft. . . ." But the NYA and CCC pay wages far under union or prevailing standards. And both are now closely linked with the war apparatus. The work camps, should they be given the push that the ISS and the government intend to give them, will expand the CCC and NYA program. On July 10, 1940, the New York *Times* reported that President Roosevelt had plans for "training boys and girls for second-line defense as distinguished from active military service." The next Congress may see proposals for spreading work camp projects.

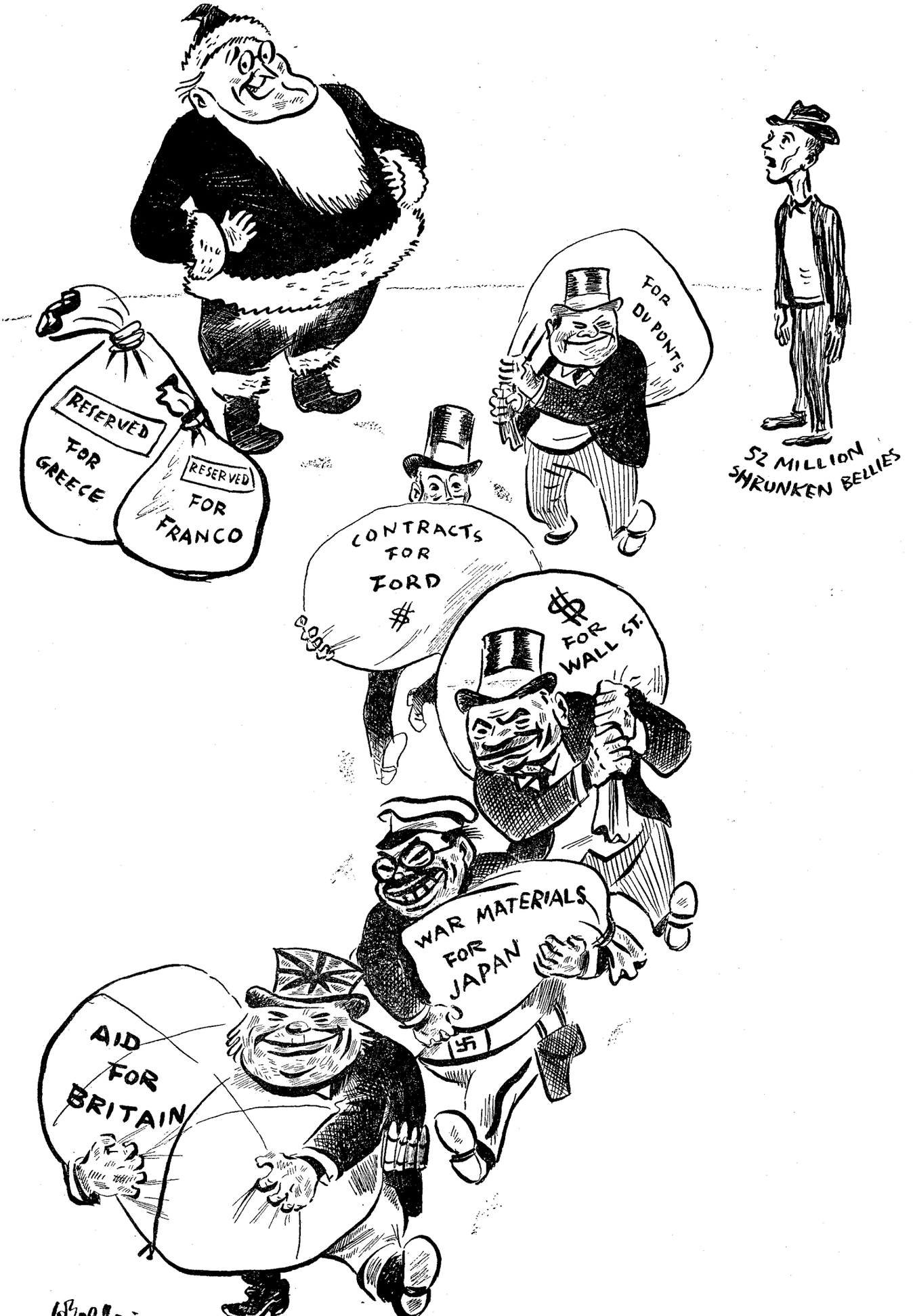
The idea is taking hold in certain circles. President Gideonse of Brooklyn College, when not whipping up the Red scare, is a crusader for compulsory work camps to occupy six months of every student's year, required if the student wishes a degree. President Seymour of Yale favors four months' work in camp every year, with compulsory military training, and adds that the college course should be reduced from four to three years. There are many other advocates—all of them the "best people."

Nor is ISS wasting time before gathering young people into work camp projects. This Christmas vacation, as student groups meet throughout the country, the most respectable and one of the most influential, the National Student Federation, will hold a joint convention with the ISS at the New Jersey College for Women, December 27-29. At this gathering, the ISS hopes to persuade the Federation to quit the American Youth Congress and throw its support to the ISS. If this were accomplished, the ISS would gain much in the way of membership and influence, and it would increase the prestige of the work camp idea. But the Federation is a long way from being taken in by ISS blandishments and the contemplated merger may not go through.

If the young are handed over to reaction, the rest is easy. The ISS, dual organization sponsoring work camps, plans to take over the generation of the future. Wall Street and Roosevelt have already taken over the ISS. The blueprint has been approved. Unfortunately for the fine plans, American youth and those that look to them to continue this nation's tradition of freedom and progress, have yet to be sold the new order. There is the hitch. Spokesmen of progressive youth are going to do what they can to prevent this sale from being completed.

BRUCE MINTON.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why Mussolini Is Worried

The story of what may prove to be Italian fascism's fatal mistake. Lack of materials, a weak industrial plant mock Mussolini's plans for empire. And the people starve.

WHAT is now taking place in unhappy Italy is *nothing more than what had to happen, and it is still only the beginning.*

The disastrous military defeats of Italian fascism have come as a surprise to some observers who had looked upon Mussolini's Italy as a "great power," invested with a certain military prestige because of her wars in Ethiopia and Spain and her occupation of Albania.

The facile and historically untrue explanation that the current Italian defeats are due to the traditional "cowardice" of Italian soldiers does not even merit a reply. As a matter of fact, certain serious weaknesses of the fascist military machine were already apparent during the wars in Ethiopia and Spain. Its inefficiency, for one thing, was exposed at Guadalajara and at the same time there was revealed the unwillingness of the Italian soldiers—even of the "volunteers"—to fight for Italian *imperialist* interests.

Although fascism's previous wars were fought against poorly armed peoples, the cost to Italy was tremendous. Besides the large sacrifice of manpower, these wars consumed large quantities of military equipment and wore down the economy of the nation to such an extent that Foreign Minister Ciano was obliged to declare, in December 1939, that Italy would be incapable of waging another "big war" for at least three years. Instead, only six months later, Italy entered the war, driven by the logic of her imperialist policy and by the illusion of an easy victory after the collapse of France.

LACK OF NECESSITIES

Ciano was for once telling the truth when he stated that Italy could not risk another war immediately. She lacks all the vital necessities for the conduct of such a war: oil, coal, iron, steel, lead, copper, zinc, tin, and grain reserves to feed her civilian population and her armies. Italy's war potential from an economic point of view is weaker than that of any other imperialist power. The country suffers from two essential weaknesses: first, a general scarcity of raw materials, especially those vital to war: and secondly, a weak industrial apparatus, incapable of supplying a modern army with all the armament and munitions it needs. Thus, the Italian military apparatus must depend upon her industrially and economically stronger ally, Germany. But the help which Germany can give her in this field is limited, because she herself lacks those very raw materials Italy needs.

The fascists have talked long and loudly of "self-sufficiency." But Italy's productive capacity falls far below even her peacetime needs. Taking as 100 her peacetime needs of essential raw materials, in 1938 Italy produced the following:

Iron and steel	37.1	Manganese	14.2
Oil	0.7	Coal	3.2
Rubber	0	Chromium	0
Tin	69.7	Phosphates	0
Copper	3.2	Nickel	0.1

The only war materials Italy has in sufficient quantity are nitrate, zinc and aluminum.

She produces less than one-twentieth as much cast iron and less than one-tenth as much steel as Germany. When one considers that in order to maintain an army of 2,000,000 men and a navy such as the Italian navy, 3,500,000 tons of steel and 2,000,000 tons of cast iron are needed, it is clear immediately that Italy cannot produce even half that amount: i. e., not even enough to maintain an army of 1,000,000 men. These figures indicate in part why Italy waited to enter the war until France, her nearest and most dangerous imperialist rival, had been mortally wounded by the German military machine.

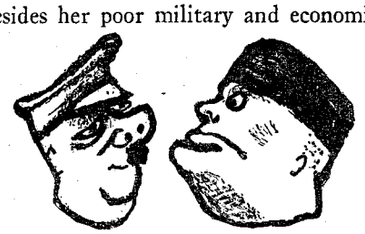
AVIATION AND NAVY

Italy's aviation, which compared favorably with other countries at least until 1937, is also handicapped by the weakness of her industrial apparatus which cannot compete with other countries in quality and quantity. Today, the fully mobilized Italian aviation industry cannot produce even 350 planes per month. The result is that in the last three years, those countries with greater industrial capacity, such as England, Germany, the United States, and the Soviet Union, have left Italy far behind in plane production.

Finally, as regards her navy, Italy was in a relatively favorable position, especially after the French navy was out of the picture. But because of the lack of fuel, the Italian fleet has to hug its home shores and has shown a disposition to avoid direct encounters with the British fleet.

Mussolini loves to threaten the world with his 8,000,000 bayonets. While it is true that Italian imperialism has a human reserve of 8,000,000 to 10,000,000, it is unable—again due to its economic and industrial weakness—to arm even a fourth of these effectives. Italian imperialism today can adequately arm for modern warfare sixty to eighty divisions at the most, or about 900,000 to 1,200,000 men.

Besides her poor military and economic resources, Italy is made particularly vulnerable by the English blockade. As a sea-power, she is at the mercy of whatever power controls the outlets to her seas. Her principal commercial outlets and her most vital lines of communication are in the Mediterranean. In 1938, Italy imported 24,000,000 tons of goods, of which only 4,000,000 were transported overland, while 20,000,000 came by way of the Mediterranean. Of these 20,000,000 tons, only about 2,000,000 came from neighboring Mediterranean countries, while the rest had to come through the Suez Canal or via Gibraltar. Of the 20,000,000 tons of goods reaching Italy via the Mediterranean (which now are unable to come through) three-quarters were raw materials indispensable to her war production, such as oil, iron, coal, rubber, cotton, etc. All of her commerce today must be carried via railway and must depend on what Germany is able and willing to give her.



Italy's chief railroads are run by electricity. The blockade, then, accompanied by an intensification of air bombardments of her vital industrial centers and her electric power plants, could, *after a time,* almost completely paralyze the country.

Despite these obvious and dangerous weaknesses, Mussolini plunged Italy into the war in June 1940. That particular moment was chosen in order to take advantage of the opportunity of holding an official position of belligerent with regard to France. With Italy's intervention, Mussolini hoped to come away with a rich slice of booty. His disillusionment was all the more bitter in that Hitler proved to be particularly niggardly towards his eleventh hour ally, leaving him to explain to the Italian people just why his promise to obtain Corsica, Tunisia, Djibouti, Nice, and Savoy was not fulfilled.

In entering the war, Italian imperialism made several serious miscalculations. Even with regard to France, the last word has not been said, so long as a French army exists in the colonies. And even though French imperialism was beaten, English imperialism not only survives, but gives evidence of being a difficult enemy to conquer, especially since she receives extensive aid from the United States. Italian imperialism did not take into account the fact that the period of easy wars of conquest against poorly armed or unarmed peoples is over and that the era of "non-intervention" is also over; that it no longer sufficed to throw a few gas bombs on poor Ethiopians to gain a military victory; that instead a long and exhausting war against powerful imperialist rivals had be faced. At the first sign of serious resistance, such as the relatively weak Greek forces put up, it became apparent how difficult it is for Italy to conduct such a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

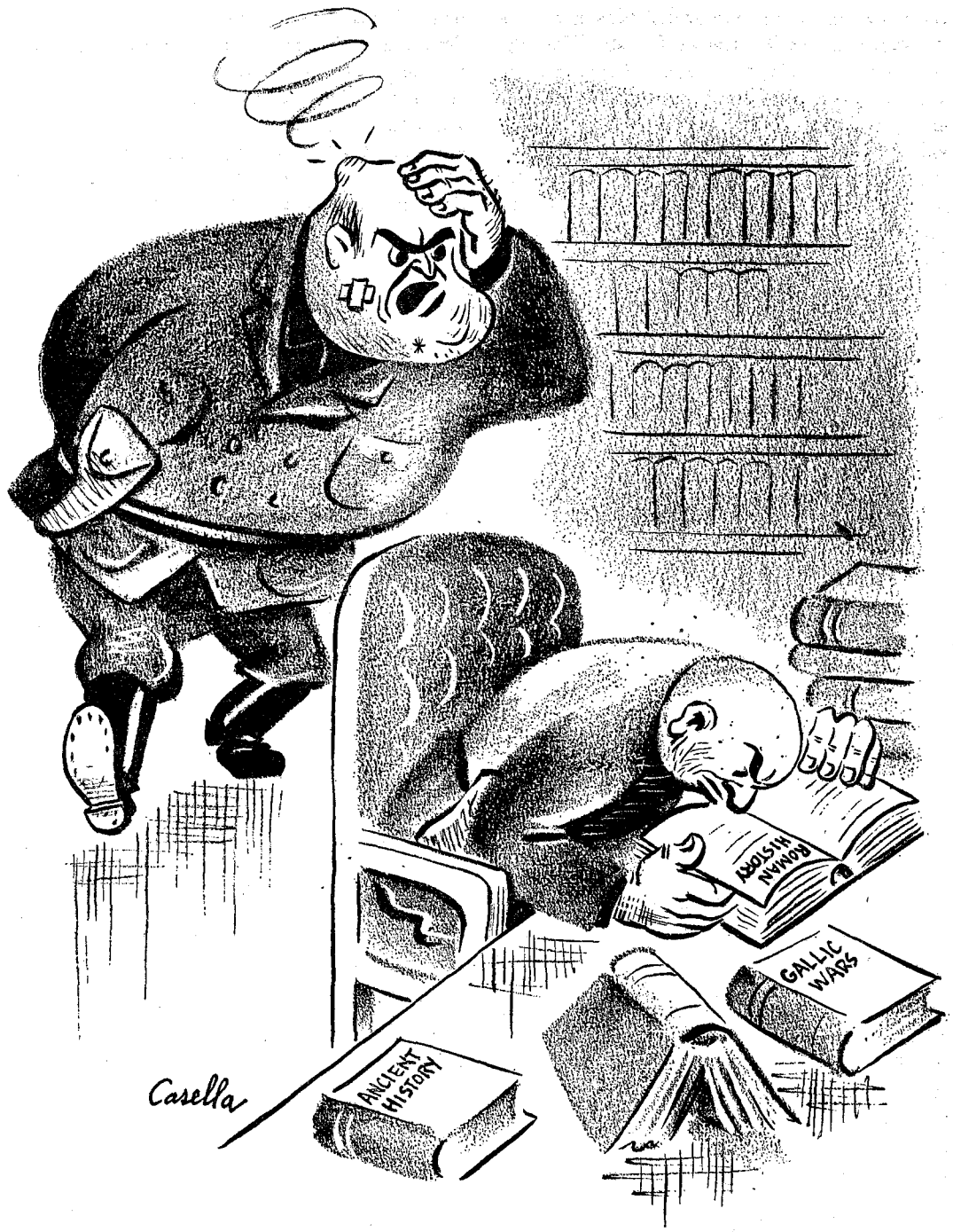
war. The first strong wind blew away the pretentious exterior decorations of Italian fascism and left its weakness exposed for all the world to see.

The Italian bourgeoisie itself was far from unanimously agreed that Italy should enter the war when she did. Even in military circles, a definite fear of this latest venture was expressed. A certain section of the ruling class, whose interests were tied up with the old, pro-English policy which Italy had followed for so many years, opposed the Axis war. From September 1939 to June 1940 a marked resistance against intervention showed itself within the ranks of the fascist party, so that Mussolini was even forced to take public note of it. The pro-intervention, pro-Hitler forces are to be found predominantly among those industrialists who stand to profit most from the war, whose economic interests have been tied up with German industry rather than with French or English investments. Donegani, head of the powerful Montecatini Chemical Trust and a large stockholder in the Snia Viscosa works; Ciano, who owns the majority of shares in the Terni Arms plant (along with his father-in-law, Mussolini); Agnelli, head of the Fiat works, and other such monopolists, belong to the interventionist, pro-Hitler bloc. And small wonder, since Italian imperialism's foreign ventures have brought them huge profits. After the Ethiopian war, the capital of the Montecatini trust rose from 600,000,000 lire to 1,300,000,000. The reserve fund and profits of this trust have increased in these years to 1,095,000,0000 lire; i.e., double the initial capital. The Terni and Fiat corporations have benefited similarly.

CONSUMPTION GOODS

On the other hand, the traditional Italian consumption-goods industries, such as textile, etc., have suffered from an acute shortage of raw materials and from lost markets. The same is true of agriculture, which can no longer export and which lost (and never regained) many of its markets during the Ethiopian war. The representatives of these industries and the big agriculturalists were opposed to another war, especially war on the side of Germany.

But fascism, while it is unable to solve its internal contradictions, is still able, through terrorism, to stifle opposition, at least until a crisis breaks out which sets into motion all the dissident forces that have been growing all these years. In 1924, just such a crisis developed, at the time of the Matteotti murder. The Italian masses, whose resistance to fascism had been betrayed and broken by the Social-Democratic leaders, arose in their wrath and demanded that Matteotti's assassins be brought to justice. Mussolini trembled (he said later that he was never so near disaster as in that moment) while many of his *gerarchi* became so frightened that they deserted him and even denounced him openly. They feared even their own gendarmerie and magistrates; they were afraid they might be arrested for complicity in the crime. But most of all they feared the anger of the Italian people. Many



"But what did Caesar do when the men retreated?"

strikes broke out all over Italy and a general strike threatened. Again the Socialist leaders intervened to calm the masses. In the meantime, Mussolini had some high-ranking fascists arrested and tried for the crime. Some were jailed. The Socialists once more betrayed the mounting revolutionary mood of the Italian workers and confined their protests to the *"Aventino"*: (they walked out of Parliament and met by themselves, accomplishing nothing except to split again the anti-fascist forces in and out of Parliament). Later, when the danger was over, Mussolini was able to boast that he had been personally responsible for the kidnapping and assassination of the Socialist Matteotti.

In a certain sense, the situation today is more serious for the fascists than it was in 1924. For now Italy is at war and hunger is stalking the land. Today the workers and peasants are united by their common interests against the war and against fascism. The civilian population is suffering acutely. And finally, a part of the Italian people, the soldiers, are armed, and all depends upon the use to which they put their arms. The resignations of Badoglio, De Vecchi, and the bloody Cavagnari must be seen in the framework of this developing situation. It is not improbable that other much more profound changes will follow. (Incidentally, the American press wrote a great deal of nonsense about Badoglio; he was even hailed as a great "democratic hero" who is preparing to overthrow Mussolini's government. Nothing could be farther from the truth: Badoglio not only is not a great soldier but he is, as he has always been, an extreme reactionary.)

What are the perspectives of a popular struggle developing in Italy for the overthrow of fascism and the establishment of a people's government for peace and liberty? Militarily,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the situation in Albania and Africa is becoming more serious for Italian fascism. The capture of Porto Edda, Klisura, and Argyrocastron is important to Greece, but even more threatening for the Italian army is the Greek advance towards Elbasan. If the Greek troops succeed in occupying and holding Elbasan, the position of the Italian troops risks becoming untenable. (The comparative inactivity of the Italian aviation in Albania is due apparently to scarcity of fuel.) There are signs, too, that the Albanian people are determined to take advantage of their oppressor's difficulties by thrusting at him from the rear, wherever they can, in an attempt to regain their independence. This factor is not to be overlooked, when one recalls how these same Albanians forced the evacuation of the Italian troops in 1920 and, despite heavy odds, reestablished their violated independence in a magnificent struggle.

Graziani's fiasco in Egypt is another blow at Italy's military prestige. And here, too, the factor of an oppressed people's struggle for independence cannot be ignored. The Arabs of Libya are only too anxious to take advantage of the situation to avenge themselves on the "hyena of Libya," Graziani. The Ethiopian people, who have never given up their guerrilla warfare against the blackshirts, and who have been aided in their struggles by the Italian Communists in Ethiopia, will also have to be reckoned with. Mussolini, instead of gaining an empire, is in danger of losing one.

The situation inside Italy has become especially serious in the past few weeks. The recent decree which threatens with a year's imprisonment those peasants who withhold more grain than they need for their own use and the aggravated food shortage, may bring on open revolts in the countryside. It took less than that to provoke serious riots among the peasants of South Italy during the wars in Ethiopia and Spain.

FOOD AND WAGES

In the cities, the workers are menaced with new restrictive measures and they, more than the rest of the population, suffer from food rationing and bombardments. Meat disappeared long ago from the average Italian table, and now the chief staples—spaghetti, rice, and macaroni—have been rationed to 4 pounds a month for each family. Butter and oil and other fats have been rationed since the beginning of the war (before Italy's intervention) and prices are prohibitive. One kilogram of bread costs three lire, one kg. of third-rate meat costs 14 lire!

Real wages have decreased from 30 to 40 percent because of the rise in the cost of living. Out of a monthly wage of 500 lire, (which only a few highly specialized workers earn, working long hours) 120 are deducted for taxes. Workers must pay 1 percent of their wages for "family benefit," (if they work over forty hours they pay 2 percent and up); they must pay 1.5 percent "winter benefit," which is increased to 3 percent during the winter months. There is a "colonial benefit" tax of 1 percent, to which are added "trade union" dues, mutual benefit dues, dues to the maternity fund for women and the celibacy tax for single men, dues to the invalid fund, old age fund, unemployment tax, etc., all of which comes to 20 percent of the wages. A new tax of 2 percent has lately been introduced for the benefit of soldiers' families.

The small peasants are being ruined, the government itself acknowledging the eviction of more than 60,000 peasant households.

While consumption of all foodstuffs, including bread, has decreased alarmingly, the latest fascist decree would punish by death anyone who is found guilty of "hoarding." Signs in shops urge the people to buy as little as possible, while shopkeepers must be on the lookout for anyone who buys a suspiciously large quantity of any kind of food.

Profound discontent with fascism is manifesting itself more and more among the petty bourgeoisie, while divisions are manifesting themselves among the big bourgeoisie. So far, this deepening discontent expresses itself sharply in terms of anti-war sentiment among all sections of the population. No less an authority than Benito Mussolini himself confirmed this fact in his latest speech, when he spoke of the necessity of combating and exterminating "a certain universalistic pacifism" of the Italian people. His threats have been picked up and elaborated by the fascist press. All signs point to violent days ahead. This is indicated by the conferences which fascist party secretary Serena held last week with the heads of the old *squadristi* (vigilante groups), his announcement of an increased struggle on the "internal front," and the violent incitements in the fascist press against "alarmists," "pessimists," "defeatists," and "pacifists." An editorial in *Popolo di Roma* called for physical beating of these elements, while Farinacci's *Lavoro Fascista* outdid itself with cries for "vengeance."

"We will take a cold, clear, pitiless vengeance, man for man, head for head; a vengeance without forgetfulness and without mercy. . . an epoch-making vengeance," states *Lavoro Fascista. "That goes for those Italians who are falser than Greek money and doubly bastardized, who have not the heart to hold out to victory and who are not worthy of it. With them, fortunately, the accounting is near."*

That panic over the developing situation that is spreading among the ruling clique is best demonstrated by its need to resort to the old terror of the *manganello* and castor oil. Another symptom of this panic is that despite the totalitarian regime, at least four different versions of the military disasters have been given to the people. The first lame explanations for the failure in Albania were made by Virginio Gayda, who wrote: "Italy was not prepared to make war on Greece." This explanation, which would have laid the blame directly at Mussolini's door, was immediately abandoned, and Mussolini sought to dissociate himself from it when he stated that "no act or word of mine or the government is responsible for this situation." The little man who wasn't there then laid the blame on the "muddy valleys," as if the Greeks themselves did not also have to contend with them.

THE ALTERNATIVES

But right after Mussolini's statement, Farinacci, in his *Regima Fascista* laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of the general staff, which, in the last analysis, means Mussolini. Finally, Count Ciano's authoritative organ *Relazioni Diplomatiche* revealed the rest: the responsibility belonged to the Italian people, who want none of this war.

And that is the real answer. The Italian people are sick to death of "blood and plunder and poverty." As a recent letter from a friend in Turin noted: A crisis is developing in Italy and it is now only at the beginning. What will come depends on the Italian people, on their ability to give organized expression to their hatred of the war and fascism. Within Italy today are the forces to lead the people in their struggle. The revolutionary traditions of Garibaldi, the traditions of the Italian working class, which has not forgotten the epic struggles of 1919-1920, are still alive and waiting to find expression.

In any crisis that may mature, of course, the possibility of swift intervention on the part of Hitler to save his Axis partner cannot be overlooked. Nor can the fate of France be forgotten, so long as German troops are in Italian cities and others can pour in from the Brenner Pass. Nor can we ignore the possibility that Italian fascism, to save itself, might be forced to come to terms with British imperialism.

But any of these alternatives would only further expose the weakness and bankruptcy of Italian imperialism and would serve to deepen the crisis, not solve it. The people's struggle for peace and liberty and for the preservation of their national independence would only be intensified, until the final victory is theirs. The cry of that Piedmontese prisoner of war, who, approached by an American newspaperman for an interview, said only this: *"Basta con la guerra!"*—enough of war—will yet become the battle-cry of the whole Italian people. And that revolutionary working class hymn, *"Bandiera Rossa,"* which the Italian prisoners are reported to have sung in Greece, shall one day ring out in the streets of Italy.

MARY TESTA.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"White Only"

The war industry czars want their workers "native, reliable, intelligent" but they don't want them black. Jim Crow as personnel manager. Mr. Hillman's sorry silence.

ARE you native, white, reliable, and intelligent?

If you are, there may be a job for you in the war industries. If you are native, *black,* reliable, and intelligent, there is none. National policy has been established: the great corporations which are receiving billions of dollars in orders for war in "defense of democracy" have adopted Jim Crow as their own.

Proof? Millions of Negro workers are unemployed. Millions are trying to find work in plants now producing aircraft, machine tools, motors, steel, ships—building cantonments, roads, making uniforms.

With few and unimportant exceptions, the sign is out: "WHITE ONLY."

In Henry R. Luce's weekly magazine *Time,* issue of November 25, a full page advertisement of the United Gas Pipe Line Co. invited industrialists to build new plants in the gulf states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, and Florida. Labor, said the ad, was available . . . "native, white, reliable, intelligent." The inference is plain that Negro labor is unreliable and unintelligent. The National Urban League, which acts as an agency for obtaining jobs for Negroes, protested to *Time,* to United Gas Pipe, to the National Association of Manufacturers, and to the United States Chamber of Commerce.

Only the Chamber of Commerce replied. It evasively declared that it could not discuss the policy of a member organization.

In 1930, 5,503,535 Negroes above the age of ten were rated as employable by the federal census. Of these, 2,369,430 lived in the five gulf states. No detailed figures are available in the 1940 census, but it is likely that now more than 2,500,000 Negroes live in the area in which United Gas Pipe monopolizes the sale of natural gas.

NATIONAL JIM CROW

Jim Crow policy is not sectional in scope. Giant industries of the North which are receiving war order largesse from the administration deny jobs to Negroes in East, North, and West as well as South. No war industry jobs are open to Negroes in New York City, according to organizations which are seeking to defend the Negroes' right to work. In New York City the case load of Negroes on relief has risen from 21 percent in 1937 to 25 percent in 1940—despite a drop in the number of white workers on relief. No Negro works in the aircraft, aircraft equipment, ship-building, chemical, munitions, machine tool, motor, steel and iron, and other war industries of the East unless he accepts heavy, unskilled, stevedore jobs. There has been no decrease in Negro unemployment in the Pittsburgh area, although the steel mills are working at 98 percent of capacity. Except where CIO contracts provide against discrimination in motors and aircraft—as at Vultee—very few jobs are open to Negroes in Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle.

In the South this policy is a considered one of segregation for political purposes. Poll-tax politicians occupy important posts in Washington. Many are committee chairmen in Congress or close advisors to the President. Their power rests upon the white upper and middle class of the South who can pay the poll tax. There is no essential difference between Hitlerism and Jim Crow, in this respect. To give jobs to Southern Negroes would be to give them money for their poll tax. And the mood of the Negro today is not one of friendliness toward his political and economic white oppressors. He would vote the poll-tax boys out—if he could.

The Gulf South
Invites Industry
. . . to Grow with a Growing Country
plentiful land, good schools, pleasant year-round climate.
GAS

This anti-Negro advertisement by a southern utilities corporation was published in Time *magazine.*

PRACTICES OF DISCRIMINATION

But in the North this is not the case. The Negro votes in the North. Why, then, the national opposition to employing Negroes? Why are vocational courses operated by industries closed to Negroes? Why does the New York State Employment Service advertise for 300 carpenters to work on army cantonments—"white only"? Why does the same bureau ask for army cooks—"white only"? Why are Negro students who pay for their own technical education in private schools left standing on street corners, jobless? Why are appeals of the National Urban League to the Sperry Gyroscope Co. left unanswered?

The Negro today is a powerful force for democracy in America. To educate him, to give him job security, to place him on a plane of equality in skilled jobs would be to liberate in part his pent-up desires for equal treatment. Therefore, as a considered, planned program for reaction, the industrial overlords of the administration's war program have rejected Negro participation. Negroes cannot fly in the army or navy. They can do only menial work. They cannot be dentists, doctors, nurses. They cannot advance toward an officer's commission, unless they belong to the chosen few who are given promotion in order to obscure the vicious discrimination practiced against the many.

This policy of military Jim Crow is official, maintained by President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Stimson. Now the line is being re-drawn between black and white in civilian labor. All the progress made by Negroes in the last quarter of a century is thus to be wiped out by the war economy and under the pressure of war hysteria.

The role played by Sidney Hillman in this situation is a sorry one. In the office of the Labor Division of the National Defense Advisory Commission is Robert C. Weaver, in charge of Negro labor. Mr. Weaver has succeeded in obtaining certain minute concessions. In Maryland, Arkansas, and Virginia, where by means of state control of jobs Negro construction workers were barred from work on army cantonments, Mr. Weaver has been able to induce AFL building trades unions to permit the use of Negro carpenters. For the record, this looks like a victory against Jim Crow. But Mr. Hillman has been as silent as death about the almost universal discrimination against Negroes.

Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, and the National Negro Congress have been taking the lead in fighting this essential battle for democracy. Of the political parties, only the Communists have demanded equal job opportunity for Negroes, not only in war industries but wherever work is available, in consistent application of a program of resisting all forms of discrimination. Among trade unions, only the progressive majority of the CIO has established a policy of fighting against discrimination because of color, creed, or political belief.

War is a signal for the oppression of all minorities, the splitting of the American people into antagonistic groups, over which the fascist sympathizers hope to ride to power. The only antitoxin for this poison in the American body politic is a fearless fight for jobs. In a true democracy every man must have an equal right to work.

JAMES MORISON.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Strictly Personal

by RUTH McKENNEY

Hoover That Termite

MR. J. EDGAR HOOVER, one of the most famous employees of that stern and unyielding liberal, Mr. Attorney General Robert Jackson, announced the other day that he had compiled, after months of harrowing research work, a little honor roll—a list, to be precise, of 6,000 leaders of the Communist Party. Now I found this little nugget of news, tucked away on the front page of the New York *Times,* downright fascinating.

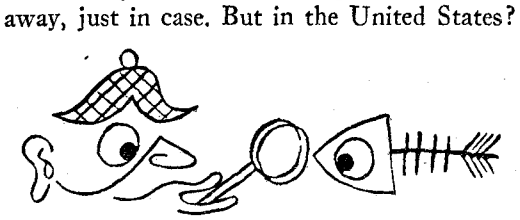
In the first place—6,000. That's a mucha, as somebody, I forget who, says over the radio. For notice that Mr. Hoover hasn't troubled to include the honest rank and file in his quaint notations. This is no vulgar list of toil-worn Communists, this dossier of the *elite.* Only leaders need apply to Mr. Hoover for mention in his card file. So the figure 6,000 gives interesting food for thought. The Communist Party itself can't possibly, in anybody's wildest dreams, have more than 1,000 organizers and secretaries—and of course Mr. Hoover doesn't bother with the mere amateurs who come to meetings and pass out leaflets.

But who are the other 5,000 names on Mr. Hoover's list? Do you suppose, by any terrible chance, that he has cribbed from such important and accurate tomes as Mrs. Dilling's trenchant opus on who's red, and who ain't? Could it be that numbered among the Department of Justice's famous 6,000 are MacLeish and Hicks, Freda Kirchwey and Bruce Bliven and Malcom Cowley? I'm not saying, mind you, I'm just guessing. But wouldn't it be ironic (!) if Max Lerner's name, like Abou Ben Adam, led all the rest? After all, Mr. Hoover has never been, in the past, exactly choosy about using the interesting word "Red" as an epithet. Like his dear rival, old Prof. Dies from down Texas-and-poll-tax way, Mr. Hoover has never been one to make silly old distinctions between men like Earl Browder and such earnest, horrific Communistic characters as Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. So, although it hurts me to say so, although the fearful injustice of the thing makes me simply pale with rage, I fear very much that Mr. Hoover's 6,000 is a mighty free-for-all list.

Indeed it is interesting to reflect that should Mr. Hoover ever use his little honor roll for anything other than brooding over, the FBI men would start with Bliven, go on to Browder, then to Cowley, find Kirchwey in the K's, and Lerner just before McKenney, with MacLeish and Mumford right on my heels. And although the boys are busy as bees in the *Nation* and *New Republic* trying their very best to lick a few boots in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, I doubt if it will do them any good. After all, the French fascists arrested Leon Blum, and a worse case of ingratitude I have never heard of. Hitler didn't bother either, as he sent the storm troopers out after the Social Democrats, to reflect that they did their best to hand Germany over to him. Many a Social Democratic leader went off to concentration camp in Prussia, complaining bitterly all the way, "How can you do this to me? I never meant you boys no harm." But the gentlemen of Unter Den Linden and Vichy, as well as the brisk, well tailored executives in the Washington, D. C., Department of Justice building, evidently figure that once a Social Democrat, always a rat. Mr. Hoover naturally has his eye on the people who really want peace and security for America, but he isn't handing out any pardons, either, to the gentry who have been busy betraying the progressive movement in the last year and a half. You can't live down a liberal past that easy, and besides, who knows, a guy who double-crosses the working class might some day put the double X on the FBI. Should Mr. Hoover trust the editors of the *Nation?* He should be so crazy.

Therefore, in the immortal words of a great revolutionist, Comrade Benjamin Franklin, I fear very much that the people on Mr. Hoover's nice little list will all hang separately, if they don't hang together now. So I earnestly commend to the attention of the gentlemen-liberals around town the current crisis in the FBI. In my humble opinion, they had better stop fooling around with aid to Britain, and get hep, to put it vulgarly but urgently, to what goes on in the United States Department of Justice.

For after all, where does Mr. Hoover get off making lists anyway? Until I read that item in the New York *Times* I had always supposed that even a hatchet murderer in this democracy, was innocent until proven guilty. Of course Hitler has and had lists; the old czar had dossiers; the Vichy government keeps card files of people they don't like; the Japanese dictatorship has lots of fingerprints stored away, just in case. But in the United States?



I am shocked. Six thousand people all written down neatly, no doubt cross indexed, in the Department of Justice. If a criminal knifes a pal in plain sight of the cops, his fingerprints don't go into Mr. Hoover's file until a jury of his peers finds him guilty. But no jury ever tried the 6,000 who repose in the FBI's card files, no lawyer ever defended them, no judge ever heard their cases. The Communist Party is a perfectly legal political organization, but Mr. Hoover, who is above the law, and above the Constitution, has tried and judged his favorite *betes-noires,* heard and denied their appeals, found them guilty before any lawyer could call their witnesses. Jury trial is the backbone of a working democracy, but Mr. Hoover doesn't like juries, so he's marked the people on his list "convicted" even before the indictments have been drawn. On his own evidence, Mr. J. Edgar Hoover is a termite, eating away at the Constitution he has sworn to defend; he is a purveyor of a foreign ideology, fascism; and furthermore, he's a subversive character, devoted to the overthrow of this American democracy.

So? So I think every liberal, even psuedo-liberals, if for no other reason than self-protection should join together in a vast campaign to rid the United States government of this dangerous menace, this Mr. J. Edgar Hoover. And while we are about it, Mr. Attorney General Robert Jackson might as well go too.

But while we are waiting for the *Nation* and the *New Republic* and *PM* and the *New Leader* and the *Forward* to rush into action, I think we might profitably employ our time by making a little campaign of our own. For while it gives me no pleasure to go around saving the skins of the traitors to the working class, such as Mr. Lewis Mumford *et al.,* we have to remember that Mr. Hoover's list of 6,000 is really directed at the American people. Malcolm Cowley is only incidental to the FBI. Mr. Hoover doesn't really care about Bruce Bliven or Freda Kirchwey. He only hopes, in his modest way, to wreck the labor movement, indict every progressive leader, smash every organization of the poor and disinherited in this country, the better to prepare the way for war and immense Wall Street profits.

Mr. Hoover, with his infamous dossier, is making war upon the American people. The 6,000 people in his card file are unimportant. What counts is the fact that one list leads to another, one card file breeds concentration camps for every union member, for every anti-war fighter. With or without the help of the "liberals" on Mr. Hoover's list, and I think it will be without that help, we Americans must force the administration to fire Mr. Hoover and destroy his precious honor roll. To the typewriters, *citoyens! Marchons, marchons* to the telegraph office armed with the addresses of your congressmen and senators. *Le jour de gloire,* i.e., getting rid of Mr. Hoover, is right around the corner if you get trade unions to pass resolutions.

A bas Hoover! *Vive la liberte!*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lockout on the Air Waves

Music belongs to the people but the big radio chains don't think so. Their plans to bar half a million tunes from the ether. The song writers fight back.

I LIKE my music in generous doses. I can take Prokofieff's Classical Symphony *en passant,* and stop at the next corner for "Red Sails in the Sunset." After two old-fashioneds, I can even get sentimental over the mountains and the prairies and the ocean white with foam. And now comes an alphabetical radio dictator, hiding behind such abracadabra as NAB, BMI, NBC, CBS, MBS, ETC., to tell me that if I want to hear Prokofieff I must listen to him in person at Carnegie Hall. For "Red Sails" I must drop a nickel in the juke box at the corner saloon, and as for Kate Smith blessing America, or even "Sweet Adeline," I'll just have to use my imagination. As for Deems Taylor's "Through the Looking Glass" or Rachmaninoff's "Prelude in C-Sharp Minor," or the "Morris Dances" of Percy Grainger —I can still play them on my old piano or buy a record, but that's all.

What I want to know is, what kind of business is this for America, barring all the popular and much of the classical music of the last half century from the air?

RADIO MONOPOLY

And so I'm protesting. I agree with Deems Taylor that music belongs to the people—it's downright madness to bar German music because we don't like Hitler, just as it is downright madness for Hitler to bar Mendelssohn because he was a Jew. But it is no less mad for the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) to bar the compositions of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) and to form a stooge music publishing company, Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI).

This war in the ether has been brewing for years. ASCAP is a voluntary, unincorporated, non-profit organization formed to collect jointly the fees to which composers and publishers are entitled for the performance of their works. Its members and twenty-one foreign affiliates have assigned to the society the exclusive right to license the public performance of these compositions, which include virtually all of the music of the past quarter century. ASCAP's contract with the radio chains expires at the stroke of midnight on Dec. 31, 1940. It has offered a new contract which has been rejected by the networks. For their part, the latter have refused to negotiate except on their own terms. They have begun a gradual elimination of all ASCAP tunes from their transmissions. By Jan. 1, 1941, this boycott of ASCAP will be complete.

Since 1931, monopoly control has become the dominant trend in radio. The broadcasters have signed up over 500 stations in that time, mainly independents. They themselves control relatively few outlets. ASCAP points out that NAB has slowly grabbed control of scripts, players, musicians, technicians; it has also standardized and centralized all radio production, mainly in New York City. Using the golden bait of national advertising, and working closely with the great national advertising agencies, NAB has dominated the field. The independent radio station owner has yielded without resistance; with the throwing of a switch, skillfully produced programs have been piped from New York to his transmitter. He has had none of the problems of creating entertainment. He has been rewarded with a fixed emolument.

ASCAP has been selling these local stations rights to use its music. It has received in return a percentage only of what the local station has received. And it happens that in the passage of this sum from the advertiser to his agency to the national broadcasting chain to the local station, 65 percent of all moneys received have clung to the sticky fingers of the chains.

It is a fact, undenied by the chains, that they have never paid one cent to ASCAP. They have used its music free of charge, have literally enriched themselves without cost. Let's examine this statement literally. The American Tobacco Company's "Hit Parade" is one of the most expensive programs on the air, costing George Washington Hill $18,000 a week. I can't give you exact figures, but let us suppose that Hill pays CBS $300 for time on WSAY in Rochester. CBS keeps $200 and gives WSAY $100. So ASCAP gets 5 percent of $100 instead of 5 percent of $300.

Under the terms of the proposed new five-year agreement, ASCAP would collect none of the money received by WSAY from CBS for the airing of "Hit Parade" music; indeed, the only money ever paid by WSAY to the composers would be charges for programs originating in the Rochester studios. CBS would be responsible for the cost of clearance for "Hit Parade" music on its entire network on the basis of 7½ percent of the net, after deducting commissions, the cost of production, and other charges. This amount, says ASCAP, would be only slightly more than now paid by the stations, but the assessment would be made where the assessment belongs—on the big boys at CBS.

ASCAP contends it is an organization of creative artists which recognizes a threat to free culture in NAB's onslaught against its members. The society points to the long chain of events in the "conspiracy" against it, lobbying by NAB in state legislatures for laws designed to discriminate against it; anti-trust suits initiated in state courts or by the Department of Justice in federal courts. Then there have been arrests of ASCAP officials. Here's the way one song writer phrases it:

"These chains create nothing. They have spent $3,000,000 on BMI and have not come up with a song hit or a standard song writer. You can't order a good song by Dick Rodgers, a violin suite by Zimbalist, or a Kreisler caprice. ASCAP is bigger than Tin Pan Alley, although the old alley has turned out some vital and enduring pieces of American folk music. The society is dominated by the writers themselves. It subsidizes composers of serious music. Jerome Kern can't write music like William Grant Still, but he believes Still should have a decent income from his work. Therefore, Jerome Kern is willing to yield part of his great royalties to ASCAP, which in turn classifies composers according to their creative quality, as judged by their peers."

POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS

The ruthlessness of NAB's plans has been demonstrated by a disregard for the interests of band leaders, distinguished artists, and the public. Fred Waring, leader of the popular Pennsylvanians, declares that "a centralized supervision of the creative and interpretive fields of music, with commercial control of the disposition of its many uses, is not in the best interest of the public welfare and could lead to the eventual destruction, through selfish commercial exploitation, of a great cultural art."

The possible implications of the boycott are startling. Philharmonic symphony programs will be censored by CBS, which will not broadcast works by American composers or by Europeans such as Darius Milhaud who belong to foreign organizations with which ASCAP has agreements. The entire libraries of noted publishers, such as G. Schirmer & Co., Oliver Ditson Co. (which has published for 127 years), and Carl Fischer, are barred. Movie producers are tied up with ASCAP; no movie song hits will be broadcast, nor any songs from current Broadway musical comedies. When Ted Husing airs the Rose Bowl Game on New Year's Day he will sit in a sound-proof booth so that no phrase of the music played by the bands may erupt from your radio. "Ballad for Americans" is banned. Medleys of popular tunes are *verboten,* since transitional phrases may resemble ASCAP tunes. Theme songs and signatures on band and sketch programs must be changed. Quizzes such as Ted Weems' "Beat the Band" and Kay Kyser's "Kollege of Swing" will definitely lose their reason for existence. Many church organists and choirs are affected: Pietro Yon, noted organist of St. Patrick's in New York, can't broadcast any of his own compositions.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fritz Kreisler cannot play his own "Caprice Viennoise" for the radio public. The radio, that great teacher of music appreciation, can no longer offer the melodies of Victor Herbert, Kern's "Old Man River," the spirituals of James Weldon Johnson and W. C. Handy, the rich tonal modernisms of George Gershwin, "The Lord's Prayer," "Ave Maria," "Eili, Eili," "The Rosary" will be heard no more than "St. Louis Blues" and "Frankie and Johnnie." It's a blackout for musical America.

DISMAL SUBSTITUTES

What will the chains offer as substitutes? Tunes by BMI. A small library of numbers owned by renegade publisher Edward B. Marks & Co., many of which will be tied up by litigation. Songs in the public domain, written before 1884. BMI's works have failed to catch popular fancy. They are reminiscent, poorly written, maladjusted to popular taste. Only one, "Practice Makes Perfect," has figured importantly as a popular song. But the broadcast chains do not seem to care. "The public be damned" is their slogan. The owner of an independent radio station is stuck with what NAB chooses to offer him. Even if it isn't political censorship at this moment, it smells of Goebbels. It isn't American.

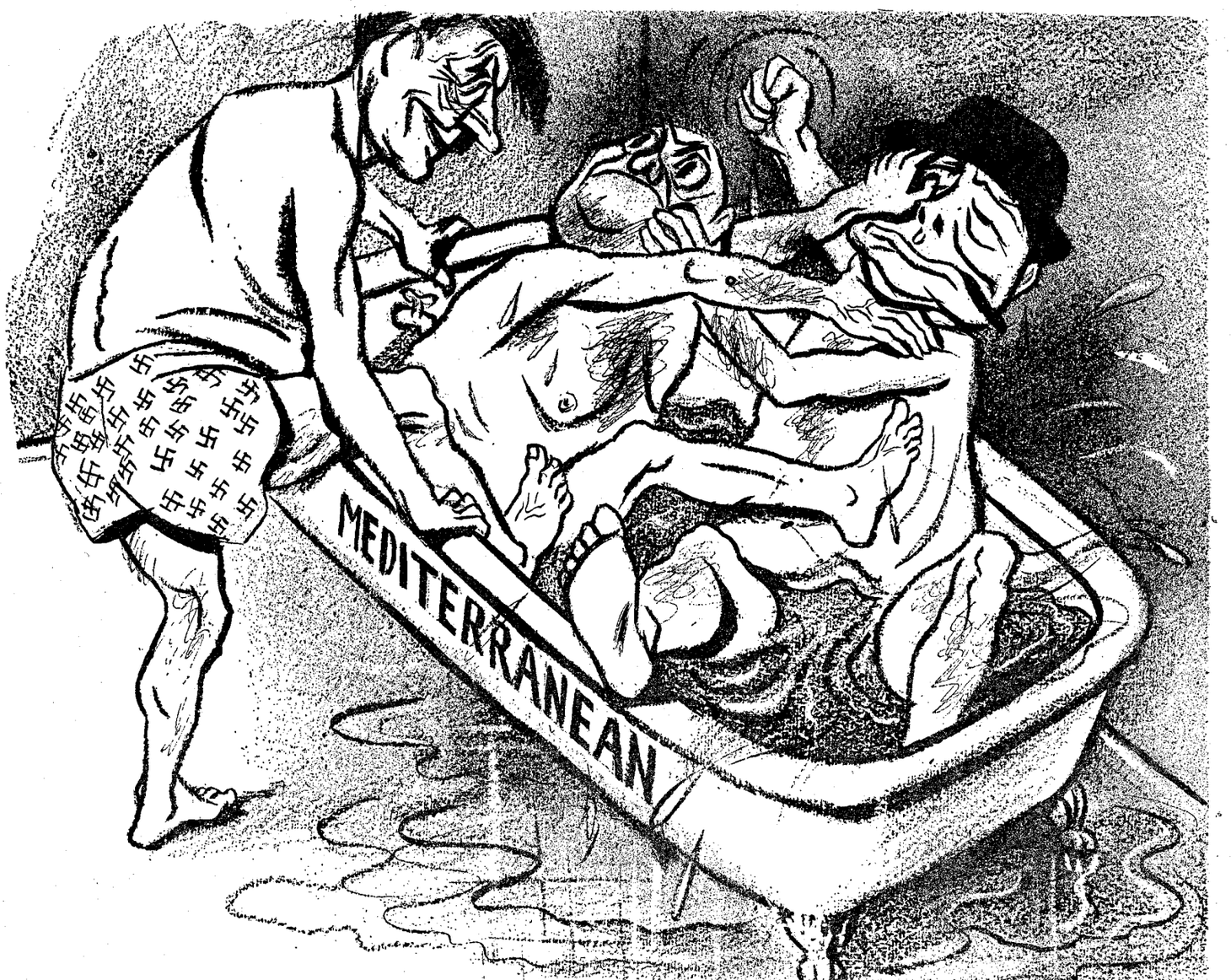
There is no possibility of peace by January 1. The chains plan to attack. ASCAP is seeking to organize public support, especially to bring pressure on the great national advertisers who pay directly for radio time. ASCAP also believes that after five or six weeks, the chains will use up all available material. "Pop Goes the Weasel," "Turkey in the Straw," and "The Daughter of the Regiment" will wear out their resurrection clothes and go back into a comfortable grave. Complaints will pile up. The chains will discover they have made a fatal error. In the meantime, song writers are going out among the people, playing special performances, appearing at independent radio stations which have re-signed with ASCAP. Performers who are not tied to the chains by personal contracts will appeal for aid—Bing Crosby has declared that he will have nothing to sing on the air.

It's a strange war. But the issues are simple and clear. There's money in song writing, and the Wall Street boys would like to cut in on it. And cut costs at the same time. BMI, for instance, is paying its unskilled tune apprentices one cent per performance on the air. A hit song is seldom played more than 100 times a day on the chains. The scab song writer thus would make $1 daily for his mediocre work. ASCAP feels an artist is worthy of his hire. To protect once-successful writers who fall into straitened circumstances, ASCAP has made this pledge: "No member of ASCAP who writes acceptable music or anyone dependent upon him, shall ever want." The society distributed $305,000 for pension and relief payments in 1939. Its members consider music is an art not an over-the-counter transaction.

Popular music stems out of the roots of American life. From Stephen Foster, from sophisticated Cole Porter through polysyllabic Larry Hart and ex-lawyer Arthur Schwartz up and down the land, in Harlem flats and Fifth avenue pent houses—music belongs to the people.

This new monopoly grab gets me plenty hot.

RALPH WARNER.



Mare Nostrum

Michaels

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW MASSES
ESTABLISHED 1911

Editors
A. B. MAGIL, RUTH MCKENNEY, BRUCE MINTON, JOSEPH NORTH.

Associate Editor
BARBARA GILES.

Business Manager
CARL BRISTEL.

★

Labor and Defense

THE administration and its big business-controlled Defense Commission are playing a cat-and-mouse game with social legislation and labor rights. There is much talk about equal sacrifice by all, many innuendoes about speeding up production and preventing interruptions in the so-called defense industries. But no official person as yet dares permit more than a shadowy glimpse of the simple, ugly truth. Commenting in the *Wall Street Journal* of December 17 on the recent speeches of Defense Commissioners William S. Knudsen and Donald Nelson, Frank R. Kent put it this way: "It is true that both Mr. Knudsen and Mr. Nelson urged that industry and capital too must cooperate and not hang back, but clearly that was in order not to have their remarks construed as an attack on labor." It is behind this pretense of equal treatment and fairness that the assault on social legislation and on the unions is gathering momentum.

How does labor propose to meet this situation? During the past week the leaders of the two wings of the trade union movement, William Green and Philip Murray, gave their answers. Green's was typical, cringing and submissive. He boasted of the betrayals of AFL leaders in the name of "national defense," and declared that the recent AFL convention had committed itself "to avoid strikes, not only for trivial reasons, but for scarcely any cause." This is a lie; the convention made no such commitment. It was Green himself who in an interview with the press pledged no strikes in war industries.

Murray's reply came in the form of two statements. The first placed the blame for lagging production on the industrialists "to whom the defense program has been virtually turned over," and opposed lengthening of the work week, particularly in the midst of great unemployment. Murray's second statement proposed the creation of a new National Defense Board and of a council in each basic industry, to consist of an equal number of representatives of labor and industry, with a government representative acting as chairman. These councils and the defense board would have three objectives: to guarantee efficient production of armaments "through the full and complete cooperation of industry, organized labor and government"; to guarantee the production of non-military goods "so as to further improve and extend the American standard of living"; to preserve basic democratic rights, that is, freedom of speech, assembly, and worship and the right of labor to organize in unions of its choice.

The last two objectives are clearly in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the American people. But they are in conflict with the basic purpose of Murray's proposal: to enlist labor support for the so-called defense program. This program, far from aiming at the defense of the American people, is designed to further imperialist expansion and war abroad and the extinction of democracy at home. Labor participation in executing this program will not change its character, but, on the contrary, as the experience in Britain has shown, convert labor into an instrument for the destruction of its own rights.

Labor can serve true national defense only by refusing to tie its hands or permit others to tie them, and by striking out independently for higher wages, shorter hours, the organization of the unorganized, and the preservation of peace and civil rights. As the first world war demonstrated, collaboration with the enemies of the people can only lead to disaster.

The APM Conference

THE American Peace Mobilization's call for a mid-January conference in Washington will provide an opportunity for many to voice the predominant peace sentiment of the nation. Labor is acting, too; 3,000 seamen of the National Maritime Union have voted for a "march to Washington" next month, to protest against the war drive and also against anti-labor legislation.

The activities of the genuine peace forces of the country need to be sharply differentiated from such spurious groups as the America First Committee, which also professes to be working for peace. This is a big business outfit headed by Gen. Robert E. Wood, chairman of Sears, Roebuck Co.; its national committee includes such labor-baiters and pro-fascists as Henry Ford and Gen. Hugh S. Johnson. The America First Committee represents those sections of monopoly capital which oppose American involvement on the side of Britain either because they prefer a Nazi victory or because they fear the social consequences of a prolonged war and therefore favor a negotiated peace at the expense of the peoples of western Europe and the Soviet Union. The No Foreign War Committee, which was launched last week by Verne Marshall, editor of the Cedar Rapids, Ia., *Gazette,* seems to be of the same type. Treasurer of this committee is Robert A. Lancaster, New York investment banker. One of its members is Col. Charles A. Lindbergh, whose Nazi sympathies are no longer news.

The William Allen White Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, on the one hand, and the America First Committee and the No Foreign War Committee, on the other, are two sides of the same capitalist coin. They represent two trends within the ruling class which at times overlap and fuse. The interests of the majority of Americans, however, can be served neither by war nor appeasement, but only by the frustration of all imperialist plans and the establishment of a people's peace.

The Dictators

THE new four-man defense council set up by President Roosevelt means the creation of a big business junta with virtually dictatorial powers. We say "big business junta" advisedly, for the council consists of William S. Knudsen, former president of the du Pont-Morgan General Motors trust, as director, the Wall Street lawyer, Secretary of War Stimson, the millionaire Chicago publisher, Secretary of the Navy Knox—and as an afterthought, Sidney Hillman, "labor" member of the National Defense Advisory Commission. Under the innocuous name of Office for Production Management, what is here being established is a super-government with vast powers extending over the country's entire economic life and over labor relations. Even were Hillman disposed to defend labor's interests—which is the last thing he intends—he would still be outvoted three to one.

The President himself unwittingly revealed the sweeping nature of the powers entrusted to the new council when he told his press conference that he could not give these powers to a single individual because under the Constitution a second President of the United States could not be set up. The inclusion of Wall Street's favorite labor leader was, of course, a typical piece of Roosevelt strategy; without Hillman the whole device would be revealed in all its bare brutality and the seduction of the workers would be much more difficult. Three Republicans and one fig-leaf—this is the symbol of Roosevelt's surrender to the forces of big-business fascism.

The Refugee Scandal

THERE are some 150,000 Spanish anti-fascist refugees in France. In addition, there are many thousands more of other nationalities scattered in France and in other European countries. But the United States government, which claims to be engaged in a great moral crusade against fascism, refuses to grant even transit visas to any but an insignificant handful of these refugees. At the same time it is permitting out and out fascists and fascist sympathizers, not to mention the dregs of European royalty, to enter this country not merely as visitors but even as permanent residents. The newspaper *PM,* which supports the war to make the world safe for the State Department's conception of democracy, has revealed that only the other day the department granted entrance for permanent residence to Pierre Massin, wealthy French dress designer, an anti-Semite and pro-fascist.

In response to protests against its refugee policy, the State Department has now felt it necessary to issue a statement. This is a pettifogging document designed to cover up

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the discrimination against anti-fascists and the solicitous treatment of reactionaries. The statement declares that of the 2,000 names submitted by various refugee committees, "only about one dozen . . . were found to be of persons whose presence here would be prejudicial to the best interests of the United States." What the statement fails to say is that many other militant anti-fascists, whose presence here the pro-fascists in the government regard as "prejudicial," are being weeded out by the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. This semi-official body, appointed shortly after the fall of France to facilitate the rescue of refugees, has devoted itself chiefly to obstructing this work.

Directly in charge of handling the refugee question are two of the State Department's most notorious pro-fascists, Assistant Secretary of State Breckenridge Long, who as ambassador to Italy publicly praised Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, and Avra Warren, chief of the visa division, who favors a loan to Franco. Collaborating with them is a Roosevelt favorite, Assistant Secretary of State A. A. Berle, one of those responsible for the embargo against loyalist Spain.

It is shocking to find the State Department's discriminatory policies receiving support in so-called liberal circles. Last week's *New Republic,* in an editorial arguing against Westbrook Pegler's campaign to bar all anti-fascist refugees on the ground that many of them are certain to be Communists, ends by accepting Pegler's—and Hitler's—premise that Communists should be kept out. On top of this, the *New Republic* insults the intelligence of its readers by stating that because of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, "A Communist in France is in no danger from Hitler"—a stupid canard which is refuted in story after story in the American press.

Genuine believers in the best traditions of American democracy should demand an end to political discrimination and the removal of all obstacles to the admission of refugees. As for the Spanish anti-fascists trapped in France, the most effective aid to them is to contribute to the American Rescue Ship Mission, 200 Fifth Ave., New York City, which seeks to raise $300,000 to finance the transportation of the refugees to Mexico where they have been granted asylum.

Watch Mussolini

ITALIAN imperialism continues to bear the brunt of the war, as most of last week's events disclosed. The Greeks progressed along the Adriatic coast, where they have circled Khimara, the sole remaining port south of Valona. In the central Albanian plain, however, things are reaching the stage of trench warfare; the weather plus increased Italian resistance work against the Greeks. Valona itself was under fierce air bombardment and was shelled for a whole day by battleship units of the British fleet. This is of prime importance, for it means that the Italian navy does not control the lower Adriatic Sea. It could even mean that the blackshirt supply lines to Albania can be severed and the Italian coast laid open to British raiders. At the same time, the Libyan port of Bardia is besieged by British naval and land forces, and some 20,000 Italian troops are reported trapped. Evidently, the British retain the initiative they gained by the capture of Sidi Barrani.

Then there were sensational reports last week, mostly from Yugoslavia, that German troops were coming down to patrol the key cities on the north Italian plain. Simultaneously, Nazi troop transports and mechanics' crews were reported assisting Italy in Albania itself. These stories are unverified, but if true, they mean that Germany is being impelled to assist Italy but only by a virtual occupation of the northern section of that country. This would be borne out by the fact that the Royal Air Force heavily bombed the German-Italian railway junction at Mannheim. It may soon be possible to say that Mussolini continues to fight only by the support of the German bayonet—an uncomfortable kind of support. And it would also mean an increase in German responsibilities, and will, as Mary Testa's article on page 12 explains, intensify every element of popular dissatisfaction and political crisis in Italy. Finally, it is noteworthy that the American ambassador, William Phillips, who is one of the key men in the State Department, is returning to his post in Rome. Here is another oblique indication that what is going to happen in the sawdust Caesar's empire is of such importance that American imperialism, undoubtedly in concert with Britain, is taking an active hand.

More on Vichy

TO UNDERSTAND the mysterious maneuvers that have been taking place in France, one must avoid oversimplifications. The original clique around Marshal Petain which came to power in the June armistice was not acting so much directly in the German interest, as in the interests of the French ruling class which feared its own people. These men represented the "Latin bloc." They had for years favored an alliance of France, Italy, and Spain to offset as well as cooperate with Germany. Hitler had every wish to deal with them diplomatically, partly because diplomacy is more economical than force, partly to impress the British Tories. But France is historically a rival to Italy in the Mediterranean. Her ruling class wishes to displace Italy, to change France's status from a subject to a partner in the Axis. By mid-September, therefore, most of the Latinists at Vichy were ousted. Only Pierre Laval remained, evidently because he promised much by way of giving Germany the cooperation of the French fleet and access to the French empire.

On the other hand, Germany was obviously not winning the war this year. This enabled the decisive sections of the French ruling class to play for time. Maxime Weygand's proconsulate in north Africa symbolizes both the limited independence and the foresight which has been developing in the French ruling class, not without raising hopes in Roosevelt's and Churchill's breast that perhaps something could be done in France after all. Which explains the appointment of Admiral Leahy as ambassador, and the kindness with which the British and American press refers to Weygand and Petain. At this point Mussolini's debacle more or less destroyed his bargaining position against France and Germany. Pierre Laval is dropped out, and Pierre Etienne-Flandin comes forward, a pro-Hitler man of long standing but an opponent of cooperation with Italy. Nevertheless, Hitler does not wish to throw away Laval's possible usefulness, which explains the release of Laval and his removal to the occupied area. Mussolini is thus the chief loser.

Hitler is being impelled to take firmer measures with France. But French ruling circles try to stiffen themselves in the hope of real concessions from Germany. And Roosevelt loses no opportunity to take advantage of the situation. The balance in France is very unstable, and will continue to be until the larger issues of the war are settled, perhaps in the spring.

Scandinavian Notes

FINLAND did not pay its war debt this year, but nonetheless, the capitalist press cherishes a warm spot for that country. Every item of Finnish news gets particular emphasis by contrast with the news from the Finno-Karelian Soviet Republic. It is as though the capitalist world hopes to return someday to the scene of its great "triumph" one year ago. Last week, a change of guard took place. Kallio Kyosti, the former president and agrarian chief, gave way to Risto Ryti, of the British knighthood and the National Bank. And with an epic symbolism, Kallio collapsed and died in Baron Mannerheim's arms soon after. This change in leadership is important, for as the Soviet press has observed, it marked the elimination of the last vestiges of democratic procedure. Ryti was chosen by the same electors who had functioned in the 1937 balloting; this year, however, the government refused to permit the Finnish people to choose new electors. This reflects a continuing crisis in the Finnish ruling class, which flows from their experiments in foreign policy last winter, from their inability to solve the economic hardships which the people experience, for example, their failure to resettle some thousands of citizens who were forcibly evacuated from Karelia last spring. As we have reported from time to time a great movement for closer relations with the USSR has developed especially among the rank and file of the Social Democratic Party; it therefore makes an important contrast to read in the NY *Times* for December 15 a report by E. V. D. Wight, Jr., who says that the ruling circles in both Finland and Sweden "hope for a quick German victory," which, they like to believe, would turn into "a final settlement of accounts with Russia." Wight

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also reports that a mission from Helsinki, which visited Berlin in August to sound out the German rulers, was discouraged from anti-Soviet aspirations. But shortly after, some thousands of German troops passed through the western part of the country. Several divisions of Swedish troops are also concentrated at the fortress of Boden, on the main route from Narvik to the Soviet border. Nor should it escape notice that Sweden—which is governed by a Social-Democratic coalition—has just signed a new trade agreement with Germany. That did not, however, succeed in arousing any cry of "betraying the international working class" among American newspapers. Scandinavia was one of the early theaters of this war. Before the war has run its full course, Scandinavia will undoubtedly come into the news again.

Truth from Mme. Chiang

INTO the glossy pages of Bernarr Macfadden's *Liberty*, issue of December 21, have slipped a few unexpected truths. The subject is China's gallant battle against Japanese aggression and the writer, Mme. Chiang Kai-shek.

"Intellectual honesty," writes Mme. Chiang, "constrains me to point out that throughout the first three years of resistance, Soviet Russia extended to China for the actual purchase of war materials and other necessities credits several times larger in amount than the credits given either by Great Britain or America." "If China is finally defeated," she says, "it will be by an economic noose fashioned by Japan out of British appeasement, American profiteering and French fear." To the Soviets she gives full credit for an uncompromising stand in defense of China at the League of Nations and the Brussels conference, in contrast to the British and French attitude of honeyed words and no action.

As for American and British financial aid, of which so much has been made by those who would defend the consistently imperialist policies of those governments, Mme. Chiang adds that dollars and pounds have always been circumscribed with conditions which prevent the use of even one penny for badly needed munitions, equipment, or war material. Soviet policy toward China is the same as Soviet policy was toward Spain—consistent support of the people against their enemies. Only the Soviets think and act in terms of human values. This is the inescapable conclusion of Mme. Chiang's article in *Liberty*.

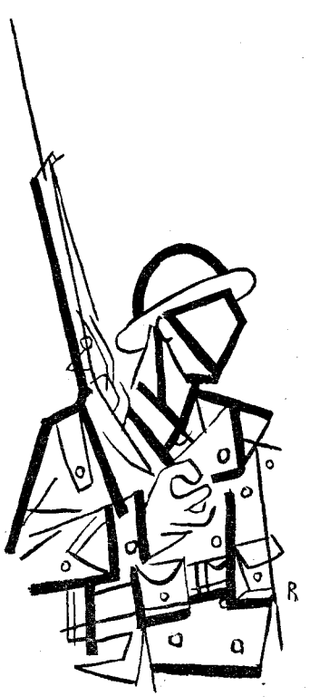
No for an Answer

THE self-assertion of the British people is gathering strength. Despite the outlawing of strikes, workers in many industries are nevertheless striking for improved conditions. A United Press dispatch reports that in October alone there were 101 walkouts, while in the first ten months of the year there were 762. Most of these struggles are centering around the demand for increased wages to meet higher living costs. Minister of Labor Bevin has now intervened in two major wage disputes, involving the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and is seeking to frustrate the workers' demands through compulsory arbitration.

These economic battles are becoming for increasing numbers of the common folk of England part of the larger political struggle for a people's government and a people's peace. The recent call for a people's convention to be held January 12 in Manchester was signed by many officials of trade unions, and defense of living standards is part of the six-point program of the convention. The strength of this movement is now attested obliquely, as is customary under capitalism, by official efforts to suppress it. Appropriately, it is the leaders of His Majesty's Labor Party that emerge as hangmen for the bourgeoisie. Herbert Morrison, Home Secretary, told the House of Commons the other day, according to the New York *Times*, "that he was reserving his right to forbid the proposed anti-war meeting." Thus British imperialism is threatening to outlaw the fight for peace, to treat the people of England as it treats its colonial slaves in India and as Hitler treats his industrial slaves in Europe. Among those whom Britain's rulers and its Labor lieutenants are preparing to brand as criminals are such signers of the call for the people's convention as the Dean of Canterbury, D. N. Pritt, prominent Socialist member of Parliament, Prof J. B. S. Haldane, and R. Palme Dutt. Americans can best aid the British people, as distinct from the British imperialists, by supporting the people's convention and its aims.

Lord Munich

ALL the lavender and ecclesiastical incense with which the capitalist press tries to fumigate the name of Lord Halifax does not make his selection as ambassador to this country smell any better to the American people. Ordinarily, we would gladly accept him over here simply out of solidarity with the British people, who will finally get him off their unhappy island. But the elevation of Anthony Eden to the foreign office plus the entrance of David Margesson, the Jim Farley of the British Tories, into the cabinet only goes to show what a grip the decisive circles of British imperialism still retain in Britain. It is enough to bring tears to Harold Laski's eyes.



Halifax was for years a devoted viceroy of India. He is an inveterate foe of socialism. He is tied in with the most reactionary religious circles on three continents. And he was one of the staunchest appeasers of Hitler. Evidently, the British ruling class felt that only such a reliable and responsible figure could deal with the hardboiled American imperialists in the next stage of affairs. Halifax' coming to Washington, moreover, compensates for the absence of Joseph Kennedy from London. The new ambassador can be counted upon to keep all the lines open to the Kennedy-Robert-Wood-Charles-Lindbergh wing of American imperialism, the appeasement crowd whose strength should never be underestimated, and might under certain circumstances become the predominant influence in Washington policy.

Hitler's Protest

THE German Foreign Office warned the United States last week that it would consider a seizure of ships belonging to Dutch, Belgian, Norwegian, or Danish nationals "insupportable." This came after Ronald Cross, the British shipping minister, admitted that he cast "a covetous eye" on these ships, now tied up in American harbors, and urged the American government to help grab them for Britain. The importance of this incident does not lie in technicalities. Unquestionably, it can be argued that if Mr. Roosevelt seizes those ships, he isn't risking more of a war with Germany than the risk contained in his present policies. It can also be argued that the British government has seized ships belonging to the Baltic Soviet Republics. It can also be argued that Germany has seized the properties of foreign nationals in Europe, not to mention entire nations. This only proves that "international law" is a hypocritical word in the dictionaries of every imperialist power. The real significance of this gesture from Berlin is that it marks the beginning of an exacerbation of relations, which will become really grave if the President's "lending-arms-to-Britain" proposal becomes official early next year. The jingoes in this country have a chip on their shoulder. The fact is, altogether apart from Hitler's share in the responsibility for this war, that it is the policies of American imperialism, managed by Mr. Roosevelt, that are leading us straight toward a rupture of diplomatic relations with Germany, as prelude to actual declaration of hostilities.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One of Us

A letter from Samuel Putnam about Ella Reeve Bloor's remarkable autobiography. The record of a valiant woman whose life is the "flesh and bone and blood of her people."

WE ARE MANY, *by Ella Reeve Bloor. International Publishers. $2.25.*

DEAR Editors: You have asked me to review Mother Bloor's autobiography, *We Are Many*. I should be glad to—if I *could* review it!

Do you realize what you are asking? Do you realize that what you are asking me to do is to review *this, our America,* all that is best and finest, all that is most significant in it since the days of the Civil War? That splendid fight for woman's freedom, equality, and true human dignity in which Ella Reeve Bloor has played so valiant a part; the rise of a revolutionary working-class movement in this country, which sees socialism as the only answer, the one way out for the American people, and which owes so much to Mother Bloor's own courageous, pioneering leadership; the fight to save the toiling, sweated children of our land and give them their right to be young, even as she stands beside their fierce, unweeping mothers and comforts them with the terrible but hope-filled meaning of it all, and goes out with their fathers on the picket line; the great, continuing battle for constitutional rights and civil liberties, for ever more and more democracy, until the brightly shining goal of proletarian democracy shall have been achieved—a battle which more than once she carried within the very prison gates.

These are but a few of the things I should have to review, if I were to undertake to "review" Mother Bloor's book. A rather large order, isn't it? I should have to review the death of the old pioneer America our fathers knew, that doughty race of brown-armed, taut-muscled, laughing heroes who pushed the frontier back and back until they had conquered a continent; and then, with the passing of the frontier, the birth of that ugly monster, Monopoly Capitalism. Mother Bloor saw all this; her story is the bridge, the span, between two eras that are in reality two worlds, and spiritually, worlds distant from one another. She not only saw it all; she has been an integral part of all that was progressive, forward-looking, life-building in this great transitional epoch; and being flesh and bone and blood of her people, she has come with them step by step, never lagging behind, never running too far ahead, but with a beckoning vision always that has served as guide to her and them.

Yes, she has followed well that advice which the Ethical Culture minister gave her years ago: "Keep right on growing, keep right on going." She has, as she says, sought out the forces of growth and progress, and

Ella Reeve Bloor

has worked with them. From the day she found, with Lydia Maria Child, that "pots and pans" could not content her (though she never neglected the pots and pans or that wonderful family of hers)—from that day forth she has gone "where the labor movement was"; and, as a result, she can now look back over the fruitful years and say, with an awe-inspiring modesty and humility: "I have learned far more from the workers than I have ever taught them. The fullness and richness of my life I owe to them and to my work in the Party."

You begin to see now, I think, what it is I mean when I say that it is impossible to write a review of Mother Bloor's book, in the ordinary sense of the word, one that would do justice to it; for never at any moment is it possible to separate her, her own personal, individual life, from the life of her age. I must say that never do I recall having encountered a more impersonal narrative, despite the fact that she is telling the story in the first person, and she herself is always in the thick of things. To my mind, she fulfills perfectly the definition of a great individual which Marx and Engels give in the *German Ideology:* one who is "adequate to the age in which he lives." And the highest praise one can give to *We Are Many* is to say that it is as great as its author, Mother Bloor. I am convinced that her book will take its place among the outstanding autobiographies in our literature. There are few like it. It is a classic of its kind.

But while I know the instinctive and Bolshevik pride she takes in a task well done—and she has reason to be proud of the workman-like way in which she has carried out this particular "assignment"—I still cannot believe that she is greatly concerned as to whether or not she may have created a literary or autobiographical masterpiece. Her audience after all, her true, great audience, is not to be found among the pale-handed fanciers of the written word; what they say, or refrain from saying, about her book matters precious little. What does matter is that up in the anthracite, in the steel towns and the mining towns, in the tenements where the clothing workers and textile workers live, down on the water-front and out on the lonely western farms—well, I think I can see what is going to happen there.

Thousands who would love to buy her book will not be able to do so. She knows that, of course; it is one of the tragedies of the capitalist system; and we do not have here the innumerable libraries and workers' reading circles that they have in the land of socialism. So I think this is what will happen. Her book is going to reach the workers. I have no fear of that; just as she herself and that ringing voice of hers has reached them all these many years, in spite of every obstacle. Somehow or other, a copy of *We Are Many* is going to find its way into a miner's shack, a sharecropper's shanty, a Nebraska farmer's home, a seaman's bunk; and when it does, it is going to be another Mother Bloor, a Mother Bloor in print; it is going to be, like her, a great unifying and *organizing* and inspiring force.

Yes, I think I can see them gathered around—around a kerosene lamp, likely as not—as one of their number holds the book and reads. I can see the intent, listening look on their faces as those pages come to life. And as they listen to the story she tells, as they have heard her tell it so often in real life—the story of strikes and lockouts and picket lines and thugs and thug-deputies; of jangling patrol wagons, packed courts and juries, and vermin-infested, disease-laden prison cells; the wholesale massacre of workers' children at Calumet and Ludlow, and the long drawn-out torture of the innocents on the mine breakers, in the tobacco fields, at the glass blower's forge; the prairie homestead with the parched, biting sand blowing through the chinks, and the wind-swept, ruined acres outside; the Negro hovels and the unspeakable terror of the Southland—as they listen to all these things, and many, many more, I think I can hear them say what the Arkansas farmers said, when they came in and saw Joe Jones' picture:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Why, that's us, ain't it!"

And then, as they hear of some of the things she has done: how, with a baby at her breast and another child at her heels, she started for the strike meeting in another town; or how, well past the age of sixty, she more than once hitch-hiked across the country, selling the workers' paper, the *Daily Worker,* raising money for Sacco and Vanzetti; as they hear how she fought for the unemployed, the unorganized, the class-war prisoners; above all, as they hear of the long fight she made for a true party of the working class, and as they listen to the message she brings them from the land where the workers say *"Nasha"*—"Ours," as they lay their hands on the factory wall or stamp with their feet on the good brown earth—I am sure that then her listeners will say:

"Why, that's our fight she's been fighting, isn't it? She's one of us! And she has the answer, too, Mother Bloor has: *We Are Many!"*

This is her audience, that great audience which her friend, Walt Whitman, envisaged but never was quite able to reach. This is the audience which is to swell and grow until the people's America comes. Meantime, she has found them and they have found her.

I ask you, now; what is a poor reviewer to do with a book like this? As a newspaper man, I've had some tough assignments in my day, but I've learned one thing: you can't "cover" a miracle. All you can do is to say, "There it is; look at it, and see for yourselves."

SAMUEL PUTNAM.

Understanding the News

THE NEWS AND HOW TO UNDERSTAND IT, *by Quincy Howe. Simon and Schuster. $2.*

TIME was when Quincy Howe wrote books with swashbuckling titles like *England Expects Every American to Do His Duty* and *Blood Is Cheaper than Water: The Prudent American's Guide to Peace and War,* and was known in publishing circles as a one-man battle of Bunker Hill. He still doesn't like the British. He disagrees with Dorothy Thompson in one respect: he doesn't think that what is happening in Europe is so exhilarating that if we stay neutral we'll feel out of everything.

It is necessary to examine Quincy Howe's opinions, which are something like a damp fog, because he uses them as his way of helping us understand the news. I don't know what the effect of this book will be on the general book-buying public, but when I finished it I was unable to walk a straight line. Quincy Howe gave me twelve tips on how to understand the news and talked a good deal about the lives and accomplishments of newspaper correspondents, but none of it gave me an insight into the nature of news like a piece of advice in the *Vultee Striker,* a mimeographed daily issued by the strike committee in the recent Vultee strike in California. "Don't trust everything you read in the papers or hear over the radio," it said. "Remember that the same interests that control the news agencies also own our plant."

The fact is, you have to understand some other things before you start understanding the news. Quincy Howe is the kind of man who would write a book called *The Oil Business and How to Understand It,* telling about the technical devices used in drilling wells. He describes the general arrangement of the press associations and lists numerous columnists and correspondents, and ends by printing his October 1 radio broadcast to show how he applies his precepts to the news of one day. He suffers from the usual commentator's disease of referring easily to nations as though they were characters in a comic strip—truculent Italy, bumbling England, militaristic Germany—and in his October 1 broadcast he made many casual statements like, "One advantage the Nazis have enjoyed over the nations of Western Europe is that they have always fully understood the weakness of Russia," and "The revolutionary aspect of the present war is receiving increasing attention not only in Great Britain but right here in the United States where even conservatives are beginning to understand that total defense comes pretty close to being revolution itself." Now if there is one thing the newspapers have tried to do in years past it is to convince the people of Western Europe of the weakness of the Soviet Union, and the big job of every propaganda agency at the present moment is to sell the war as a struggle between a revolutionary democracy and a revolutionary dictatorship. Since Quincy Howe is convinced already of both these propositions his advice about news simmers down to "Trust almost everything you read in the papers." If you do, as the saying goes, you will wake up some morning and find yourself dead. In point of fact, the only conceivable explanation for the larger policy of Germany and Japan in recent years is their recognition of the great and growing strength of the USSR. The only conceivable explanation for the course the war has taken is that it is an illustration for the text of Lenin's *Imperialism.*

Quincy Howe does allude to one or two interesting stories, such as what happened to Ludwell Denny, the former Unitarian minister who now works for Roy Howard, when he thought he would write a series of columns last spring against Roosevelt's foreign policy. For the most part, however, Howe copies down a few facts from *Who's Who* about the people he discussses, tags them with a neat label, and stuffs them in his filing system. When he goes further he makes mistakes, but they invariably redound to the credit of the press, and that way he will get into no libel suits. He is mildly nasty about one or two journalistic giants but most of them he loves. He loves Henry Luce of *Time* Inc. He illustrates his points with brief parodies, which are inept. In his discussion of the more hysterical sections of the press he gives off sparks, and some of them fly upward. At times he is somewhat hysterical himself, but compared to the editorial writers on our metropolitan dailies he is like the surface of a still lake. The fact is, he is against this war, and against anyone who is for this war. Lord bless you, Quincy Howe, but you still don't understand the news.

DANIEL TODD.

For the Gentlemen

When you see red
it will be too late;
the night will be dead,
the sun will not wait;
say, can you see
what the sunrise will be?

When you command
the sea to stand still
at the safe edge of sand,
do you think that it will?
say, do you know
where the high tide will go?

Call for your cannon,
call for your drum,
buzz with the aeroplane,
burst with the bomb;
you're up a tree now;
say, while you rave,
say, can you see now
the depth of your grave?

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Literary Criticism

THE EXPENSE OF GREATNESS, *by R. P. Blackmur. Arrow Editions. $3.*

POETRY AND THE MODERN WORLD, *by David Daiches. University of Chicago Press. $2.50.*

THESE volumes of literary criticism anatomize a dying culture; they compose a text for study; they issue the descriptive statement which should be followed by the forward thrust of argument. But the argumentative consequences of their work are carefully avoided by Mr. Blackmur and by Mr. Daiches, and as a result these studies remain truncated of conclusion and in themselves narrow in reference. In the end one realizes that the discernment of these writers has been disparate and partial. They face the fact that the modern poet or novelist can no longer discover a well-spring of faith and energy in the inherited order. Both see also that the greatness of modern bourgeois literature has almost invariably been achieved at a terrible cost—that of entering reality through a false door—of reaching the heart of man's present experience by stony and remote trails. What we miss in these books, written in so grave a human crisis, is some vision of the future, the hope of man and the promise of his art. What I felt like appending to these obsequies over the corpse of modern literature was indeed some assertion of a fighting chance for art.

Mr. Blackmur's book, even within its limited scope, is loosely organized and faulty.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for those last minute gifts

BOOKS

WE ARE MANY . . . $2.25
Ella Reeve Bloor

WE DIDN'T ASK UTOPIA . $1.29
Harry and Rebecca Timbres
Special Gift Edition

LABOR IN WARTIME . $1.00
John Steuben

AN AMERICAN LOOKS AT KARL MARX $1.59
Reg. $5.00 William Blake

LANDMARKS IN THE LIFE OF STALIN 50
Cloth bound. E. Yaroslavsky

See Our "Peace" New Year's Cards

WORKERS' BOOKSHOP
50 E. 13th ST., NEW YORK CITY
We pay the postage

JOSEPH NORTH

is a reporter who not only sees but interprets. The pages of New Masses have recorded his vivid stories of Angelo Herndon's trip to a prison cell in Atlanta, the day-by-day story of the Spanish Civil War, Mexico's bitter election struggle and the plight of the workers in fever-ridden, monopoly-cursed Cuba.

In a way, Joseph North's many contributions to New Masses have set a standard for reporting which gives a deep insight into world events. He is now available for personal speaking appearances at your Forum or Club where, as one of the editors of New Masses, he will report what he has seen overseas and in Latin-America, and, in addition, interpret the forces now engaged in the United States in the struggle for war or peace. To book Joseph North, write or telephone New Masses Speakers Bureau, 461 Fourth Ave., New York, CA1 5-3076.

Occasionally he is capable of discoveries which in turn sustain the proper social corollaries. Thus, T. E. Lawrence, seen through the narrow slot of literary style is, surprisingly, seen correctly. For the writing of this tool of British imperialism can reveal a desperation and a predicament that is more than personal. His morbid desire to lean on the sword's edge intensity of action is itself a psychological image of capitalism's epidemic distress. But even where Blackmur's perceptions are valid, we are compelled to approach them by a tortuous and hesitating style which reflects a basic unsureness of method. The essays on Yeats, Hardy, Emily Dickinson, and Melville yield rather meager and well-known conclusions for all their obfuscation. The essay on Henry Adams is a more serious failure. For here the critic reverts to the romantic tradition of a great pathetic figure, a blighted genius, whose personal tragedy was the consequence of the noble mind's endeavor, the eternal "expense of greatness." Our suspicions of thinness are finally confirmed in a series of omnibus-reviews in the course of which Mr. Blackmur casually dismisses *Native Son* as a "social fairy-tale"!

David Daiches has written a very different book. Carefully planned, clearly expressed, it traces the development of English poetry from the breakup of the Tennysonian tradition to the present moment. Mr. Daiches is aware of the social pattern and the reading of his *Poetry and the Modern World* provides an automatic criticism of the incoherence of Mr. Blackmur. The evolution of modern poetry is defined as "a shift from an attitude which in various ways (ranging from total acquiescence to prophetic denunciation) recognized the responsibility of the poet to the world in which he found himself to an attitude which rejected that responsibility (the rejection ranging from simple escape to an attempt to replace the rejected world by a new one)." And there is a place here for the late Victorians, the pessimisms of Hardy and Housman, the prophetic tension of Hopkins, the quietist retrenchment of the Georgians, the final rupture effected by poets as dissimilar as Wilfred Owen and the Imagists.

Three individual studies comprise the remaining half of the book—of Eliot, of Yeats, and of the Auden-Spender-Lewis coterie. Yeats and Eliot had no authoritative faith that lay in the common emotions of men in society. They were forced to set up a rigid scaffold of ideas designed not to expand but to limit significance to a manageable scale. But such abstract systems could not supply adequate life-patterns such as were to be sought by the left-wing poets of the thirties. Daiches' examination of this last group is especially valuable in view of their recent defections. The doubt in the recent work of C. Day Lewis, the triviality in the latest volume of Auden's, show that in some degree the adherence of these writers to the left may have been a convenience of structure rather than the "change of heart" they spoke of.

KEEP *the hands of Labor* FREE

American labor is now entering upon a gigantic struggle to preserve a fundamental right — the right to strike. This is the struggle of all progressive America to preserve another fundamental right— the right to fight for peace!

The monopoly newspapers — intellectual hatchet-men of the war-makers—have organized a great conspiracy to help the Washington Administration shackle labor in the bonds of anti-strike legislation. Labor's fairweather friends in the world of journalism are now beating Roosevelt's war drums, hurling charges of "sabotage" and "treason" at workers who fight for decent living standards in the face of Wall Street's immense war profits.

All those who are determined to keep the hands of labor free, depend upon the Daily and Sunday Worker for full and accurate accounts of labor's struggle against anti-strike legislation! It is both a political necessity and a personal privilege to read the Daily and Sunday Worker!

Special Introductory Offer
(Except Manhattan and Bronx)

DAILY and SUNDAY WORKER
1 Month $1.25

Daily Worker
50 East 13 St., New York, N. Y.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Despite all that he achieves, however, David Daiches has written a confined treatise; he fails to explore the implications of his own findings. His discussion of the effect of the World War on poetry and of the real progress effected by an anti-war poet like Wilfred Owen—this surely should have brought an answering strophe in the final chapter which deals with the present moment. Instead Daiches lopes off with a rather coy backward glance and a few vague humanist generalizations "feeling . . . with a mixture of relief and regret . . . that in spite of everything he has left his most urgent argument unsaid." This self-limitating compulsion is reflected in the academic and arbitrary restriction to British poetry—a limitation which is broken in the discussion of Eliot and the Imagists in any case. Certainly the influence of a poet like Hart Crane is required in the consideration of any poetry now written in the language. More important is the lack of the balance of realism provided by the Americans—Lindsay, Sandburg, Masters, as a necessary counterweight to the attrition of feeling in the Imagists or poets like the Sitwells.

MILLICENT LANG.

Guns and Housing

HOUSING FOR DEFENSE, *by Miles L. Colean and The Housing Committee. Twentieth Century Fund. $1.50.*

IN SPITE of its title, this survey is concerned neither with housing nor defense. Its actual task is the hammering out of a program to enable the real estate interests to raise the price, restrict the quantity, and adulterate the quality of dwelling space in the "defense areas"—i.e., in the ship-building, aircraft, and munitions centers.

The cannons-instead-of-butter character of the survey is implicit even in its foreword: "In March 1940 the Twentieth Century Fund began a survey of the housing situation in the United States . . . by May, however, the world situation had drastically changed and . . . in view of all this, the Housing Committee decided to turn aside" and prepare the present study.

The survey consists of an incomplete and uncritical summary of the government's housing activities in World War I; extensive speculations on the economic and geographic directions in which industry *might* expand under the impact of war, together with certain proposals for rationalizing construction methods; and a detailed program to enable the landlords to fleece the housing consumer more efficiently.

Housing for Defense is remarkable for the way in which its conclusions blandly ignore even the scanty historical material included in the survey itself. Thus, after portraying the complete inability of private capital to cope with the housing problem of the last war, the authors can nevertheless "see the probable greater speed, flexibility and economy of private as against public housing." Again, in the face of the admittedly notorious rent-gouging of the period, the authors say that "the very existence of the local [Chamber of Commerce] committees prevented rent profiteering by exposing or threatening to expose such instances to the public."

In its general approach, this book differs from its many predecessors only in that it is concerned with a special phase of real estate operations—the sudden, acute, and temporary housing shortages which inevitably develop in wartime around the shipbuilding, munitions, and aircraft centers. The very nature of this shortage makes it difficult for the authors to hide behind Herbert Hoover's windy verbiage about "home owning" being the "bulwark of American democracy." The defense workers will have to rent, and rent at any price. And this survey is primarily concerned with "limiting, so far as possible, the administrative burdens of government and the general tax burden on the public"—that is, preventing any low-cost public housing in these areas. For the sake of their argument, it is necessary for the authors to completely ignore both the accomplishments of the US Housing Authority limited though they are, and the rich technical and organizational resources which it represents. Instead, there is an extensive discussion of lavish governmental aid to private capital through the FHA, RFC, HOLC and other so-called housing agencies.

The contempt with which the authors regard the physiological and psychological needs of the consumer—i.e., his health—is apparent from their handling of the subject. There is only the briefest mention of housing standards; in effect, the authors propose that all dwelling space be rented *before* new construction is "encouraged." They even suggest the subdividing of non-residential buildings (stores, lofts, etc.) and campaigns to get home owners to add a room for rent.

The former liberals of the USHA who have jumped on the band wagon of defense may think that they can save their jobs by so doing; but if this little book is any index to the strategy of the hatchet men of real estate, the professional housers will find themselves right out where the workers are—in the cold. For the revival of these hoary half-truths and bald misstatements means only one thing—the landlords are out to kill public housing, no matter how meager its program.

HENRY F. COOPER.

Christmas Carol: 1940

For all that centuries have gone
In slow corrosion of its charm,
For all the mitred men have done
To twist it to the people's harm,
For all the cozening of minds
By learned lying to distort
So sweet a tale to serve the ends
Of bank and parliament and court—
For all of that, the legend yet
Is beautiful and dangerous,
And we the poor do not forget
The Child was born to one of us.

MICHAEL FINN.

HIT THE TOP at HOTEL ALLABEN
LAKEWOOD NEW JERSEY
303—7th St.
THE HOUSE OF WINTER ACTIVITY
Phone Lakewood 819
TOPS IN FACILITIES—Every Room with Bath-Showers.
TOPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS
• Fam Arte Trio • Rose Grossman
• Maxim Brodin • Duvid Oppotochu
• Zelda Zlate • Lola Adler
But NO TOPS in Rates—We're Very Moderate
Director: Jack Schwartz, formerly of Unity Hotel

ARROW-HEAD LODGE
ELLENVILLE, N. Y. Ellenville 502
New Year's in the Shawangunk Mts.
You are invited to enjoy a Yuletide Vacation that will include:
Skating : Tobogganing : Skiing : Sleigh Rides
Musicales : Special Entertainment
Dance Orchestra
At Special Low Rates
MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW!
City Inf.: Dr. D. Newman, JErome 6-2334

Birdland
OPEN ALL YEAR
Formerly Lewisohn's Estate. Central Valley, N. Y. 1 hour from N. Y. 225 acres in fascinating hiking country. 5 miles of paths. Riding. Ice Skating. Skiing. Seasonal Sports. Library. Congenial atmosphere. Musical Recordings. Open Fireplaces. Excellent cuisine. Adults. Tel.: Highland Mills 7895. Mgt.: FANNIE GOLDBERG.

ARCADIA OPEN ALL YEAR
FISHKILL, N. Y.
1100 acre estate. Modern oil heating plant, plus wood-burning fireplaces in spacious, comfortably furnished rooms. Indoor and outdoor sports including skiing and skating on premises, bicycling, symphonic recordings. Unexcelled cuisine.
Make New Year's Reservations now
Phone: Beacon 727 — N. Y. Phone: CHelsea 2-0967
R. R. Station: Beacon, New York

THE SPORT CENTER OF THE EAST
TRIPLE LAKE RANCH
SUCCASUNNA, N.J.
RESERVE NOW FOR NEW YEAR'S
Enjoy the holiday at this popular nearby resort • Free Horseback Riding Instruction • All Winter Sports • Well-heated accommodations • Teachers' Discount on Full Holidays • Only 37 miles from N. Y. N. Y. Phone: TR. 5-2163.

AN *ARTIST INVITES YOU
to...his 100 acre farm
...glorious country
...superlative cooking
...homey atmosphere
...barn dances, all sports
...55 miles from N. Y.
Limited accommodations for holidays; low rates
* GEORGE A. PODORSON
250 Park Ave., N. Y. C. Phone: PLaza 3-8926
or Locust Grove Farm, Sylvan Lake, Hopewell Junction, N. Y.

PLUM POINT
the=year=round=vacation=resort
Magnificent estate on the Hudson River
Only 53 miles from New York
All outdoor sports Saddle horses on grounds
Fine Library Superlative cuisine Musical recordings
Booklet Sent on Request
Write P. O. Box 471, Newburgh, N. Y. Phone Newburgh 4270
MAKE RESERVATIONS NOW!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Conquest of the Mannerheim Line

The new Soviet film tells the story of how the Red Army performed an unprecedented military feat, the storming of the most powerful fortified zone in the world.

THE important thing about *The Mannerheim Line,* a realistic Soviet film about the war in Finland, which is now showing in New York and Chicago, is its workmanlike quality. It is a sober narrative. It wasn't necessary to stir the Soviet people to hysteria against the Finnish people, for socialism does not fight that kind of a war. Soviet citizens do not need to be reminded that within twenty years three military thrusts against the Soviets have been organized on Finnish soil, that the rulers of Finland are fascists who used foreign troops to overthrow the Finnish socialist republic, that millions of good English pounds and American dollars have been poured into the reinforced concrete of the Mannerheim Line, not to protect the estates of the Finnish barons, in which the London City takes only a sentimental interest, but to allow bitter enemies of socialism to draw a bead with siege guns on the second largest city in the USSR. It was necessary in December 1939 to destroy these siege guns. Coolly, methodically, the tremendously efficient organization of the Red Army moved across the Finnish border and attacked the Mannerheim Line.

CONCEPTIONS OF WAR

There is nothing glamorous in the Soviet conception of war, and *The Mannerheim Line* should be compared in this respect to other photographic documents of this war. Before the newsreel companies agreed not to distribute German newsreels, there were several dramatic, well photographed scenes of the German advance into Poland. In one I remember a machine-gun squad of young boys dashed up breathlessly on motor cycles, flung themselves to the ground and began rattling away at an imaginary enemy with the intentness and dash of Boy Scouts on an overnight hike. The Nazi view of war is that it is exciting, fast-moving man's work. There is never a dull moment in a Nazi war. It is this view which has made the morale of the German army so good when it is proceeding rapidly across undefended country and which will cause it to crumble like plaster when it is opposed by determined enemies with something to fight for. War in British newsreels is emotional in a different way. The scenes of bombed areas in England are not designed to show what war is like for civilians but to raise anger against the nation which supplied the bombing planes. Even the anti-war movies which were so numerous a few years ago in the era of the disarmament conferences were not really anti-war, like *The Mannerheim Line*. Their message was the foolish pacifist one that all wars are senseless. For the business men whose fourth-quarter profits will be reported soon on the financial pages, this war is not senseless.

From the way they went into battle it was clear that the soldiers in the Red Army knew what they were doing. They were not having a good time, for war is not pleasant, particularly when it is fought at forty below zero. Fifty thousand men died before the Mannerheim Line, which is not a light thing for a socialist country where no men are superfluous. The soldiers of the Red Army had a job to do, and they did it well and returned to Leningrad, where they did not goose-step down the main avenue while the people were held at a respectful distance by police lines, but made their way through the crowds, laughing and shaking hands with their friends, with posters and flowers on their tanks.

The Mannerheim Line opens with an astonishing shot of big guns going off with a roar and a flash at night in absolute darkness. There is a short explanation of the use to which the imperialist coalition of powers hoped to put the Mannerheim Line, and it is with a start that you see "Made by Vickers-Armstrong" on a captured Finnish tank. A map of the Karelian Isthmus is flashed on the screen, recalling all the names which after a year are now almost forgotten—Koivisto, Summa, Lagoda, Terijoki—and there is a chart of one section of the line showing the military problems of taking a system of fortifications which include mine fields, electrified barbed wire, tank traps, machine gun emplacements, pill-boxes, and earthen and concrete forts disguised to resemble rolling countryside. The Baltic fleet moves into action to seize Finnish islands in the Gulf of Finland. Engineers repair wrecked railway lines and bridges. The air force bombs Finnish communications. And the army moves up, heavy tanks and artillery, flame throwers, mechanized ovens, and the infantry, on foot and on skis, in white cloaks, towing heavy machine guns mounted on skis. After thorough preparation the Red Army attacks steadily for two weeks, soldiers wriggling up across the snow to cut the barbed wire and blow up the tank traps, huge guns mounted on railway carriages shelling every square inch of the fortified zone, soldiers attacking behind flame throwers and tanks. They break the Mannerheim Line. As the Red flag goes up above the town hall of Viborg you remember the feeling of relief which swept over the world last March 10. The Soviet Union is safe from attack from the north.

Here there is a cold, scientific description of one of the concrete forts, with its two levels which once were garrisoned by a hundred men. It has been taken; it is in ruins. The camera swings slowly from one room to another, from the barracks on the lower level to the artillery emplacements on the top, looks out through the slits in the six-foot-thick reinforced concrete at the shell-pocked slopes and the forest of naked, shattered trees. There were 232 of these forts. They were built from the unhappiness and starvation of the Finnish people and they cost the Soviet Union 50,000 men. *The Mannerheim Line* is a grim, tragic picture; there are few of the stock horror shots of dead, twisted soldiers which represent the evils of war to most cameramen; but no horror shot is as shocking as the scene through the machine gun slit in the captured fort.

THE RED ARMY

The Mannerheim Line will be useful to students of military science both within and without the Soviet Union, as the record of the first modern war fought in the Arctic. It is a refutation of the account of the war which was given the American people. "The Red Army is no joke," said *Life* recently when its military experts had seen *The Mannerheim Line,* but a year ago the editors of *Life* were among the most prominent to split their sides laughing at the antics of the Red Army. There were those who recognized the true character of the war at the time, particularly military men who didn't have to make up their minds from evidence supplied by the Associated Press. Since the war most correspondents who covered it on the side of the Finns have admitted that more lies were told then than at any time since 1919. For twenty years the Red Army has been alternately portrayed as powerless or invincible, depending on necessities of the moment. Even during the Finnish war it would be blundering and inefficient when the newspapers wanted to show their contempt for socialism, and menacing and formidable when they wanted us to fight. To some the whole period of the war was a bad dream, in which the performance of the papers, the radio, and the newsreels was unreal, too fantastic to have happened. It happened, all right, and no one who had watched the press and the newsreels go to work on a strike like the Little Steel strike of 1937 was surprised. I hope William L. White, Leland Stowe, James Aldridge, Harold Callendar, Wade Werner, and all the others who reported the Finnish war will see *The Mannerheim Line* before they get too old. I hope many others who only read their dispatches will see it, too.

DANIEL TODD.

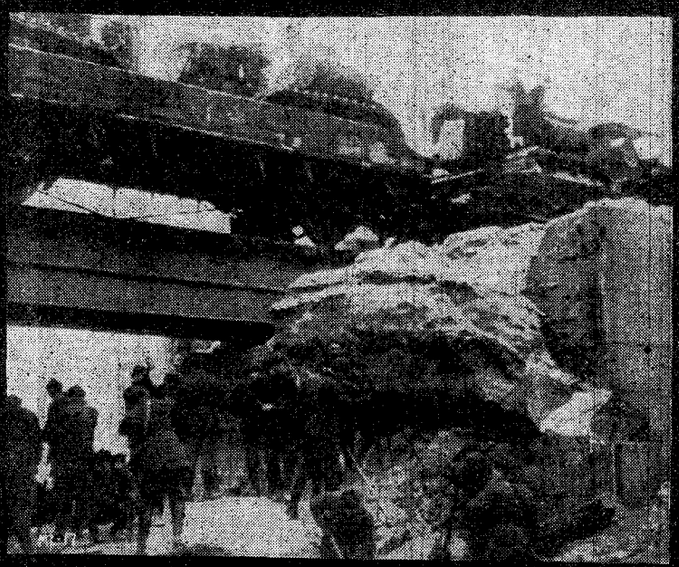
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

White-robed Soviet troops advancing on the Mannerheim Line

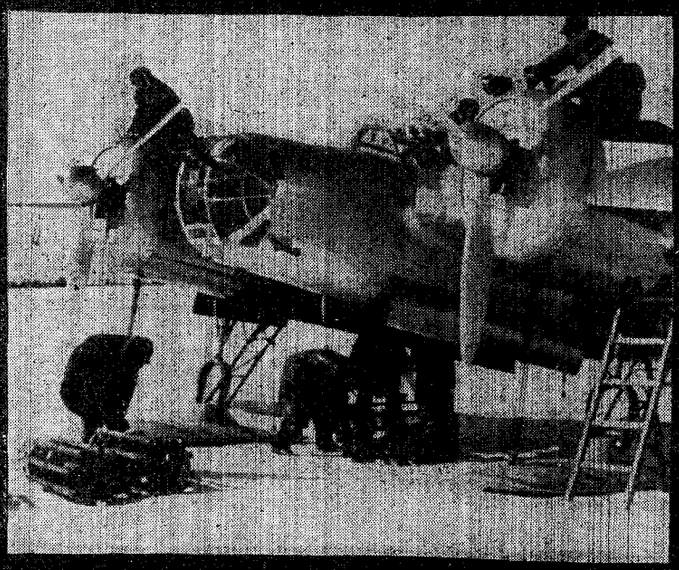
Ready for action Red infantry moves behind a protecting tank

Red shock troops skillfully moving in formation on skis

A thirty-ton tank hauls an armored sledge into the line of fire



Busy Red engineers repairing a bridge destroyed by retreating Finns



Preparing a streamlined, medium bomber for attack

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MUSIC ROOM OFFERS
COLUMBIA RECORDS
REDUCED UP TO 50%

1 Scheherazade
Rimsky-Korsakov
Rodzinsky-Cleveland Orch. $5.50

2 Beethoven's 4th Piano
CONCERTO—Walter Gieseking at the Piano 4.50

3 A Program of Mexican Music
Carlos Chavez Conducting..... 4.50

4 Le Sacre Du Printemps
Stravinsky Conducting N. Y. Philharmonic 4.50

5 An Album of Russian Music
Shostakovich-Meytuss and Mossolov 2.00

6 Nutcracker Suite—
TSCHAIKOWSKY
Stock Conducting—Chicago Symphony Orchestra 3.50

ERIC BERNAY'S Music Room
Union Shop
133 W. 44th St., N. Y.
LO. 3-4420
Mail and phone orders filled promptly
Open Evenings

The All Year Gift!
The Special Limited Edition
SIX SONGS FOR DEMOCRACY
Autographed by Paul Robeson
$5.00 the album
The Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade receive $2.50 on each album
THE MUSIC ROOM
133 W. 44th St., N. Y. LO 3-4420
Mail orders shipped promptly. OPEN EVE'S

Coming NM Events:
NEW MASSES New Year's Eve
RIGADOON
(old French for Jamboree)
Forget the Conga
Greet America's next dance craze
Do the Rigadoon.....New Lyrics
New Music.....New Rhythms
Professional dancers will introduce it
ALSO: Brilliant floor show
Tuesday Eve., December 31st—Manhattan Center
The Second
"INTERPRETATION PLEASE!"
on THE LITERARY WORLD with a panel of outstanding experts on literature and art
Thursday Eve., Jan. 23, 1941, 8:30—Webster Hall
1911-1941 NEW MASSES
30th Anniversary CELEBRATION
A cultural program commemorating 30 years of crusading journalism
Watch this column for further details
Sunday afternoon — February 16, 1941
2:30 P.M. — Manhattan Center

Mr. Shaw Retreats

The Group Theater performance of "Retreat to Pleasure."

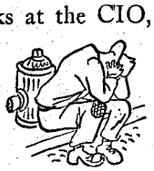
IRWIN SHAW has written his own criticism in the title of his new play, *Retreat to Pleasure*. It is a capsule-criticism, and should be elaborated. For it represents not only the retreat of Mr. Shaw, but also the retreat of many another quondam leftwinger who has been unable to stand up under the pressure of present events. And it also celebrates and points up the complete debacle of the Group Theater.

Mr. Shaw some years ago wrote a striking theater-piece in *Bury the Dead*. Despite many dramaturgical weaknesses, despite many facets of thought and presentation that were extremely *jejune*, the play had a well-deserved success. For with the laudable emotionalism of youth, Mr. Shaw spoke out against war in terms that were immediately recognizable, that were frequently moving in the extreme. The drama was derivative, the action was halting, but many individual speeches of the resurrected dead struck deep at the heart of the problem. Irwin Shaw was made.

Since then the best we have seen of Mr. Shaw was in the pages of the *New Yorker*, where he published many slight and charming stories; we saw *Gentle People*, which was a mildly allegorical and good-natured "attack" on fascism; and we did not see his *Quiet City*, which reached dress rehearsal only to be abandoned by The Group.

Now comes the deluge. In *Retreat to Pleasure* Mr. Shaw has written a comedy whose content, to only slightly over-simplify it, preaches the doctrine of escape. The world is full of war, pestilence and murder, violence, persecution and fascism. And the most that any sensitive human being can do, says Mr. Shaw, is to have himself a time before the bullet that bears his name finds him and calls a halt to all mundane aspirations. The fable that embellishes this theme is the merest piffle: a playboy, a millionaire, a leftish bohemian are in hot pursuit of a skittish damsel. She refuses to marry any one of them, though consenting to go to Florida with one. In Miami where, as she says, it is impossible to believe that home relief exists in Ohio, they take up the chase in full cry. She consents to marry the millionaire, has her mind changed by the bohemian, only to have him announce, with her surrender, that *he* has changed his mind. I'm only twenty-five, he says; the world is too beautiful; there are too many lovely girls for me to settle down with so little time left. Exit.

As a sop to what social conscience is left him, Mr. Shaw sprinkles his drama with innocuous cracks at the bourgeoisie, with mild criticism of their way of life. He also takes cracks at the CIO, at people who



CHESTERS' ZUNBARG
CLOSE 1940 AT CHESTERS!
Eat, play and be modernly merry at this DELIGHTFUL HIDEAWAY in the Mountains. Ice skating on our own floodlighted lake—all winter sports available and indulged in even now. Pleasurable Indoor diversions—Arts and Crafts, modern dances—library, music to read or dream by—Open fireplaces—cozy quarters—good eating, genial company.
FULL STAFFED GALA ENTERTAINMENT
'Phone: Fallsburg 53 Woodbourne, N. Y.

ROYALE-HARMONY
Formerly Unity and Royale Hotel
MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS FOR NEW YEAR'S NOW!
Ideal place for your winter vacation—"Tops" in entertainment. All winter sports—FREE BICYCLING, excellent cuisine, 501 Monmouth Ave., Lakewood, N. J. Tel. Lakewood 1159, 1146
Management: Gross, Gelbaum and Broude

GIFTS that are DIFFERENT
Sterling Silver Pin $3.95
From U.S.S.R., Mexico and other countries. JEWELRY — hand made Sterling Silver.
HAND MADE dolls, bookends, woodcarvings, brassware, peasant shawls, hurraches, Zarapes.
HAND EMBROIDERED blouses and dresses
PEASANT CRAFTS
55 W. 42d St., N. Y. C. LA 4-4699

NEW MASSES Classified Ads

50c a line. Payable in Advance. Min. charge $1.50
Approx. 7 words to a line. Deadline Fri. 4 p.m.

ART EXHIBITION & SALE

A Xmas Exhibition and sale of PAINTINGS, WATER COLORS, PRINTS & SCULPTURE priced from $1 to $50 is NOW being held at the AMERICAN ARTISTS SCHOOL, 131 West 14th Street, N. Y. C., THROUGH JANUARY 4th, DAILY from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. and from 7:30 P.M. to 10 P.M. — SATURDAYS from 10 A.M. to 11 P.M.

FURS

SKILLED FUR CRAFTSMAN offers you exceptionally low rates on custom made coats and jackets. Remodeling and Repairing done to perfection. Try us. ARMAND ET SOEUR, 145 West 30 St., CHickering 4-1424.

INSURANCE

Whatever your needs — PAUL CROSBIE, established since 1908—FREQUENT SAVINGS, 135 William St., N. Y. Tel. BEekman 3-5262.

REGISTRATION—SCHOOLS—INSTRUCTION

WORKERS SCHOOL, Winter Term Registration! Complete program of Marxist-Leninist courses. Room 301, 35 East 12 Street, N. Y. C.

ROOM FOR RENT

356 W. 44 St. Large, sunny, modern attractive ROOM. FURNISHED or UNFURNISHED. Kitchen privileges. Call weekdays evening, weekends all day. Melnick.

VACATION RESORTS

BARLOW FARM. A friendly and nearest home for your perfect Xmas and New Year vacation. Limited reservations. Ice skating on private lake. Free booklet. SHERMAN, Conn., Tel. New Milford 756 J 3.

VOLUNTEERS FOR NEW MASSES WANTED

NEW MASSES would be grateful for VOLUNTEER clerical HELP in circulation campaign. Apply Room 1204, 461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.

WEARING APPAREL

"VALUES NOT LABELS" at MISS GOODMAN'S who is having a special reduction on all her exclusive Model Dresses, Coats and Stunning Dinner and Evening Gowns, 474 7th Av. (36 St.) LA 4-4013.

GOINGS ON

A. B. MAGIL, editor New Masses, analyzes the week's news, Sunday, December 29, 8:30 P. M. Workers School, 50 East 13 Street. Admission 25 cents.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Masses

NEW YEAR'S EVE RIGADOON

(OLD FRENCH FOR JAMBOREE)

- Brilliant FLOOR SHOW

DO THE RIGADOON
THE NEW DANCE FOR 1941

- Frankie Newton & HIS MAJOR JIVE BOYS

TUE. EVE. DEC. 31

MANHATTAN CENTER

34TH ST. at 8TH AVE.

Tickets - $1.00 (PLUS TAX) IN ADVANCE
$1.25 AT DOOR

On Sale AT: NEW MASSES - 461 4TH AVE.
GRAY'S (LEBLANG'S) - MANHATTAN CENT. & BOOKSHOPS

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BUNDLES FOR AMERICA

The bundle, or a number of things tied together, is derived from the French, Dutch and Anglo-Saxon. In this country it first appeared in colonial New England as an indigenous custom of wrapping sweethearts (fully clothed) in bed. It came about as an earnest effort to offset the bleak New England climate. In this form it is generally associated with the absence of heat or light.

Etymologically, the bundle is also linked with the German Bund. This at once brings to mind Bundles for Britain which has its roots in the same evil, viz. the bleak intellectual climate of the bourgeois mind, characterized by much heat and no light. Like the New England boudoir bundle, these will pass in time.

Then there is the Bundle for America, the forerunner of things that will remain. Its most perfect form is the NEW MASSES bundle, associated with much light. As a proper bundle should, it ties together worthwhile things: comment and criticism by world-famous writers, lucid Marxist news analyses, and trenchant coverage of all fields of culture.

Distribution of NEW MASSES bundles by partisans of peace and democracy is a fast-growing national custom. They get their bundles from NEW MASSES at the following rates: up to 25 copies at 10c each, 25-50 copies at 9c each, and over 50 at 8c each. If they can't get around to passing out the copies themselves, NEW MASSES does all the work of addressing, wrapping and mailing the separate copies without any increase in rates.

NEW MASSES itself likes to bundle. It has a long list of people who ought to be getting copies. There are many old friends who had to drop subscriptions when they lost their jobs; and a thumping number of people who have been nominated for sample copies by their friends. NM cannot afford to do this bundling without help from its readers.

Here are the three ways to Bundle for America:

1. Send NM the price of a bundle you want to distribute yourself.
2. Send NM the price (no increase) of a bundle and the names and addresses of people to whom you want the copies sent.
3. Send NM the price of a bundle to be distributed to people on NM's list.

are serious about the way the world is going. What the hell, it's all down the drain, up the flue. Get into your winter underwear, get into a crap-game and win some money, go to Miami beach and soak up the sun.

In a cast of fifteen people, two former Group actors, one former Group guest actor, make ap, rance. Harold Clurman's direction is adequate to the task in hand; but the entire spectacle emphasizes the fact that the organization which still calls itself The Group Theater is now a private producing company.

Leif Erickson, Edith Atwater, Hume Cronyn, Art Smith, George Matthews, Fred Stewart, Ruth Nelson—in fact the entire cast deserve applause for the inordinately hard work they put in, attempting to make something out of nothing. For without them, *Retreat to Pleasure* would be (if possible) less than what it is: a definitely reactionary play that is neither sufficiently amusing nor ingenious to rake in the shekels Mr. Shaw and Mr. Clurman undoubtedly heard jingling in the offing.

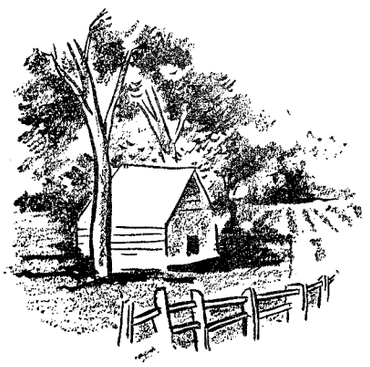
A well-stuffed gent sitting next to me, said, "Irwin Shaw," and sniffed. "He's one of these socially-conscious people. I find them tiring after awhile." But it is precisely because Mr. Shaw is no longer socially conscious that he is so tiring. For my money, I would rather have watched the Powers model in the slinky bathing -suit, who parades a poodle several times during the play.

ALVAH BESSIE.

"KING LEAR"

THE performance at the New School for Social Research of Shakespeare's *King Lear,* directed by Erwin Piscator, famous pre-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Hitler *regisseur,* and starring Sam Jaffe is interesting chiefly for its ineptitude.

On a curtainless stage Mr. Piscator mounted a production in his well-known manner of functional design. There was a series of rising platforms and inclined planes; the action was performed upon these several planes, the scenes were spotted, the voices of the performers came to you from the revolving staircases, from concealed microphones in the auditorium, mingled interestingly with various curious squeaks and groans from a sound machine off stage. The actors revolved, or rushed up and down the aisles, or addressed the audience, embarrassing the latter no end. You were held breathless by the latent and imminent probability that one or a score of them would break a leg, a rib, or a neck. One or another performer was constantly obliged to vault the inclined planes, turn around, and speak to another one. Mr. Jaffe helped one performer out of a hole the night I saw the show. Others tripped on their garments or over unforeseen pitfalls, and badly concealed extras carrying portable set-pieces grew dizzy as the merry-go-round went 'round.

If you think I am mad, I quote you Lear: "Anger has its privilege," or something of that order (someone has borrowed my copy). Or again, "I pray you, undo this button." The button is Mr. Piscator's obviously sincere desire to achieve an integrated production of actors, turntables, Shakespeare, and anachronistic clocks. It didn't come off. You could not hear Shakespeare for the howling of the banshee machines off-stage, the trampling of a multitude of feet upon hollow platforms. But the New School publicity assures us that this was not one of Mr. Piscator's "spectacular" productions, merely a "modest" one.

As the mad king, Mr. Jaffe was intelligent and miscast. He possessed neither the presence, the voice, the passion, nor the artistic stature to fill those clothes. It is not his fault; someone should have discouraged his laudable desire to perform the role. Several of the minor characters revealed commendable talent: Erford Gage's Edgar; Roger DeKoven's Edmund, Ross Matthew's Earl of Gloucester. If Margaret Curtis had been costumed less obviously for the Stork Club, I think her Regan would have been more effective; the Goneril of Rachel Adams possessed authority and intelligence and Herbert Berghof's Fool was a sensitive job by an actor hampered by a strong German accent. A. B.

Premiere: SUN., JAN. 5, at 8:30 P.M.

"No for an Answer"

AN OPERA IN 2 ACTS by MARC BLITZSTEIN

MECCA TEMPLE 130 W. 56th ST.

Tickets $3.30, $2.20, $1.65, $1.10, 83¢ At Room 810, 200 FIFTH AVE and LEBLANG'S

FIRST NIGHT PROCEEDS TO AMERICAN RESCUE SHIP MISSION

RESCUE SPANISH REFUGEES

It's Pagani for RECORDS

Make this a RECORD CHRISTMAS

Remember your family and friends with a gift that "keeps on giving" all year round.

Our very large record department contains some very unusual records such as:

★ CALYPSO
★ 50 RUSSIAN SOVIET
★ WORKERS' SONGS
★ HOT JAZZ
★ DECCA
★ SIX SONGS FOR DEMOCRACY
★ MARIAN ANDERSON RECORDS
★ PAUL ROBESON RECORDS
★ VICTOR MASTER WORKS
★ VOCALION

Send for special lists.

OPEN EVENINGS

O. PAGANI & BRO.

Tel. CH. 2-6744
289 BLEECKER ST.
NEW YORK, N. Y.

The Second Big Week!

"It is a picture no well-informed person can afford to miss." —N. Y. Post

Artkino presents

"MANNERHEIM LINE"

(Spoken in English)

MIAMI PLAYHOUSE
6th Avenue near 47th Street
20c to 1 P. M. weekdays — Cont. from 10 A. M.

Your Friends Will Be Here — Will You?

UNITED LEAGUES OF NEW YORK Present their GREATEST New Years Eve CELEBRATION
★ CABARET SHOW
★ DANCE TILL DAWN
FREE Refreshments
MANHATTAN COCKTAIL with SEAGRAM'S Whiskey
FAVORS, SOUVENIRS, ETC.
MICHAEL JAY & HIS 17 PIECE ORCHESTRA
World's Largest & Most Beautiful Grand Ballroom!
All THIS for 75¢
ROYAL WINDSOR
66th ST. & BROADWAY, N. Y.
FOR RESERVATIONS Tel. Circle 5-4600

CAMP FOLLOWERS OF THE TRAIL
announce their
ANNUAL REUNION DANCE
on
Saturday, January 11, 1941
at
PALM GARDENS—52nd Street & 8th Avenue, N. Y. C.
Admission: 65c

THE CRADLE WILL ROCK
presented by C. C. N. Y.'s DRAMSOC
ONE PERFORMANCE ONLY
SAT. NIGHT DEC. 28th
700 Tickets at 35c and 55c
Others 75c and $1.00
at New Theatre League
110 W. 47th Street CH. 4-8198

"the food is swell, the price is low"

LIBERTY CAFETERIA & RESTAURANT

Table Service & Self-Service
Supper served from 5 to 8
Catering our specialty
Prompt service on outgoing orders
262 Fifth Ave. (at 29th Street) N. Y. C. LE 2-6931

Ralph Berton's—Jazz Matinees

No. 1 JAM SESSION Sunday—Dec. 29th, from 2-8 P.M.

Featuring: COLEMAN HAWKINS

Jay C. Higgenbotham ● Teddy Bunn ● Max Kaminsky ● Pee Wee Russell ● Art Hodes ● Rod Cless ● And Others

VILLAGE VANGUARD—178 7th AVE.
65c COVERS—FOOD AND LIQUOR AT MINIMUM
FOR RESERVATIONS—WI-7-9136

It's not only what you see, but also where you see it. Follow NEW MASSES for the finest reviews on art, books, movies, theater and records. The best affairs are advertised in NEW MASSES. Follow NM's ads.

Belle Politi
IMPORTS
JEWELRY
ART LINENS
JAVANESE BATIKS
GUATEMALAN TEXTILES
HANDKERCHIEFS & SCARFS
19 WEST 8th STREET
GREENWICH VILLAGE
NEW YORK CITY

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW MASSES & Plus AN OUTSTANDING BOOK

		Our Gift Combination Price
1.	**ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY AND PRIVATE PROPERTY** by Frederick Engels . . . . . regularly $6.00	$5.00
2.	**LABOR IN WARTIME** by John Steuben regularly $6.00	5.00
3.	**THE McKENNEYS CARRY ON** by Ruth McKenney regularly $7.00	6.00
4.	**SCIENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE** by J. B. S. Haldane regularly $7.00	6.00
5.	**WE ARE MANY** by Ella Reeve Bloor . regularly $7.00	6.00
6.	**WHY FARMERS ARE POOR** by Anna Rochester regularly $7.25	6.00
7.	**THE SOVIET POWER** by Hewlett Johnson (Dean of Canterbury) . . . . . regularly $7.50	6.00
8.	**THE FAT YEARS AND THE LEAN** by Bruce Minton and John Stuart . . . . . regularly $7.50	6.00
9.	**DIALECTICS OF NATURE** by Frederick Engels regularly $7.50	6.00
10.	**DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL CHANGE** by Harry F. Ward . . . . . regularly $7.50	6.00
11.	**RACE: SCIENCE AND POLITICS** by Ruth Benedict regularly $7.50	6.00
12.	**THE CAT'S CRADLE BOOK** by Sylvia Townsend Warner regularly $7.50	6.00
13.	**DAGO RED** by John Fante . . . . . regularly $7.50	6.00
14.	**THE MAN WHO LOVED CHILDREN** by Christina Stead regularly $7.75	6.00
15.	**THE LIFE OF MY MOTHER** by Oskar Maria Graf regularly $7.75	6.00
16.	**WITCH HUNT** by George Seldes . . regularly $7.75	6.00
17.	**THE ARGONAUTS** by Lillian Ross, George Whitman, and others . . . . . regularly $7.75	6.00
18.	**MY NATIVE LAND** by Anna Louise Strong regularly $7.75	6.00
19.	**AN AMERICAN LOOKS AT KARL MARX** by William Blake . . . . . regularly $8.25	6.00
20.	**THE BOOK OF AMERICAN NEGRO SPIRITUALS** by James Weldon Johnson and Rosamund Johnson regularly $7.95	6.50
21.	**THIS IS MY OWN** by Rockwell Kent . regularly $8.50	6.50
22.	**ULTIMA THULE** by Vihljalmur Stefansson regularly $8.50	6.50
23.	**A TREASURY OF AMERICAN SONG** by Olin Downes and Elie Siegmeister . . . . . regularly $10.00	7.50

★

(These offers apply both to new subscriptions and to renewals.)

Every week **NEW MASSES** *furthers the people's high resolve to stay at peace. Keep NM with you in 1941. Take advantage of the special holiday offer:*

NEW MASSES, 461 Fourth Avenue, New York City, N. Y.
Gentlemen:
I wish to take advantage of your Gift Combination No. . . . . **Enclosed find** $ . . . . .
You may send the book to:
Name . . . . . .
Address . . . . . .
City . . . . . State . . . . . .
The one-year subscription to NEW MASSES (or renewal), you may send to:
Name . . . . . .
Address . . . . . .
City . . . . . State . . . . . .

NM 12-31-40

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED